TRICKS & TIPS

Adobe Photoshop

- Next level tips and secrets get you to the heart of Adobe Photoshop

OVER 485 SECRETS & HACKS

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- Advanced guides and tutorials for creative Photoshop image editing

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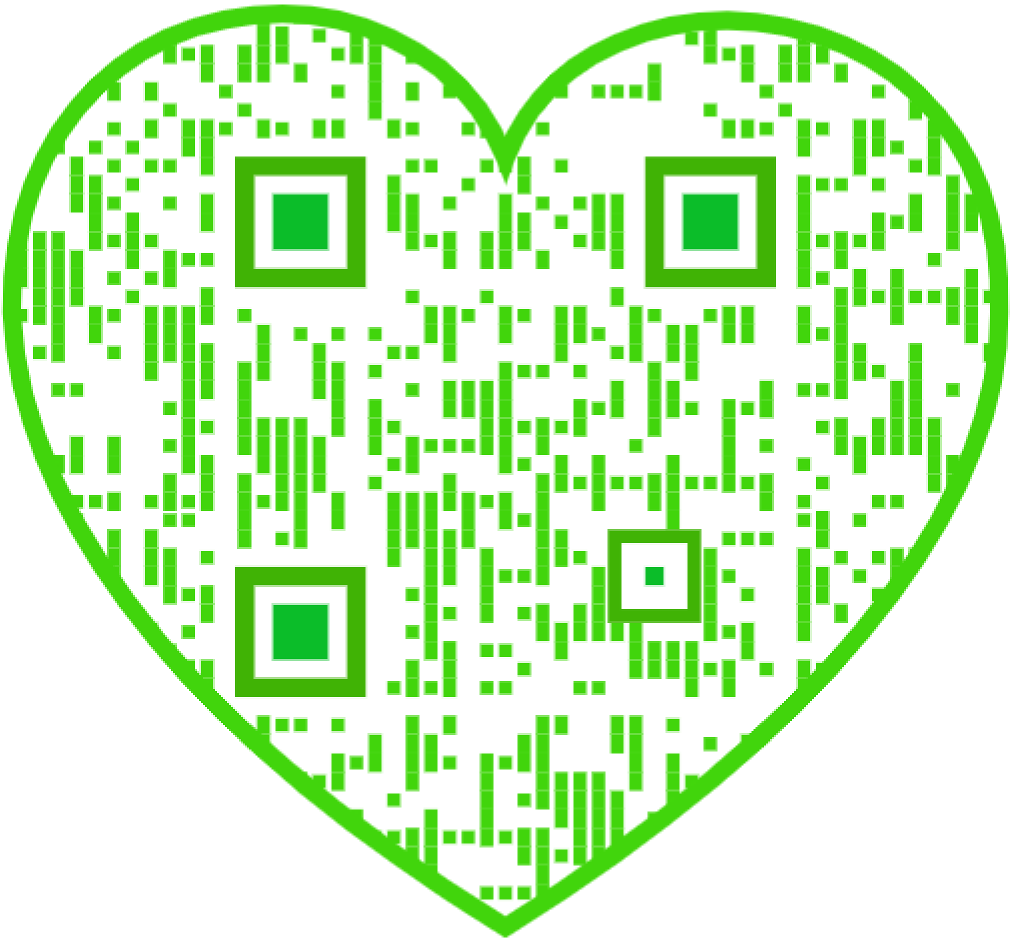

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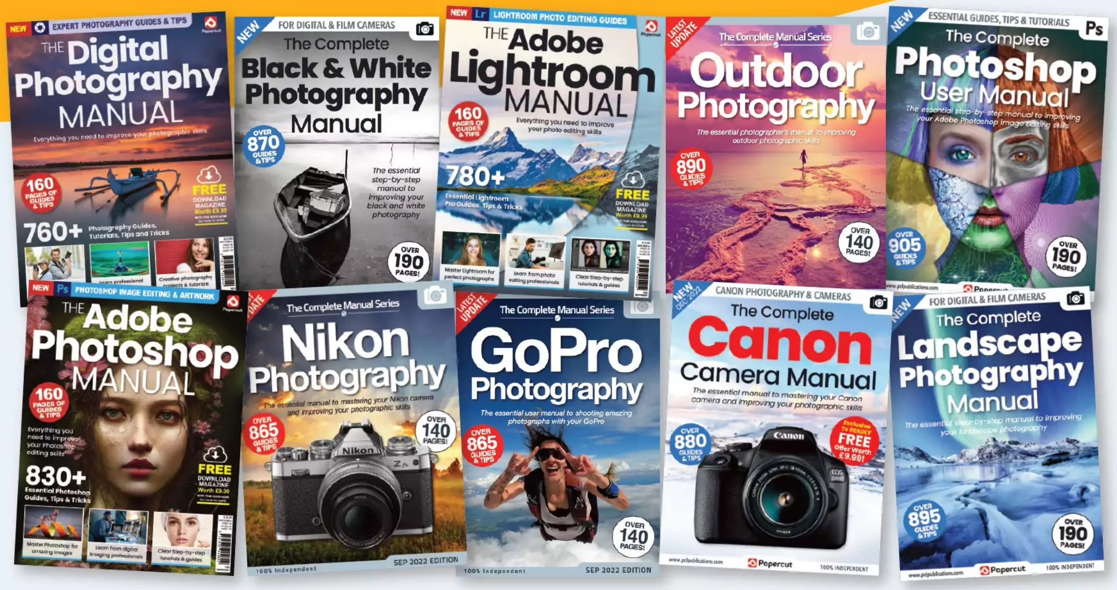

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TRICKS
& TIPS

Adobe Photoshop

Adobe Photoshop Tricks & Tips is the perfect digital publication for the user that wants to take their skill set to the next level. Do you want to enhance your user experience? Or wish to gain insider knowledge? Do you want to learn directly from experts in their field? Learn the numerous short cuts that the professionals use? Over the pages of the new advanced user guide you will learn everything you will need to know to become a more confident, better skilled and experienced owner. A user that will make the absolute most of their use and ultimately Adobe Photoshop itself. An achievement you can earn by simply enabling us to exclusively help and teach you the abilities we have gained over our decades of experience.

Over the page our journey continues, and we will be with you at every stage to advise, inform and ultimately inspire you to go further.

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06 Sometimes, Photoshop may throw you a curve ball and do something you may not expect. It may even throw up errors you've not seen before. Don't worry, we have a section that might help you out if you're in trouble.

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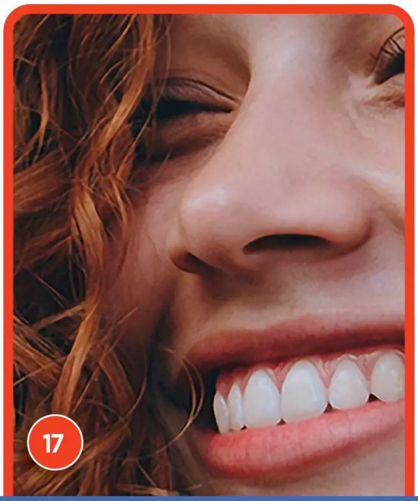

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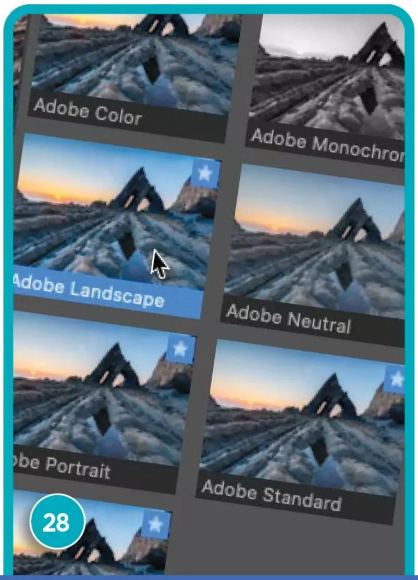
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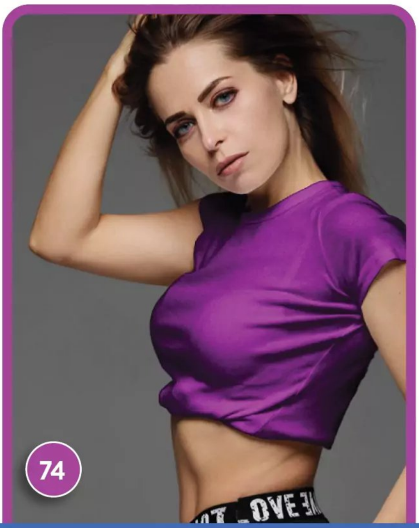
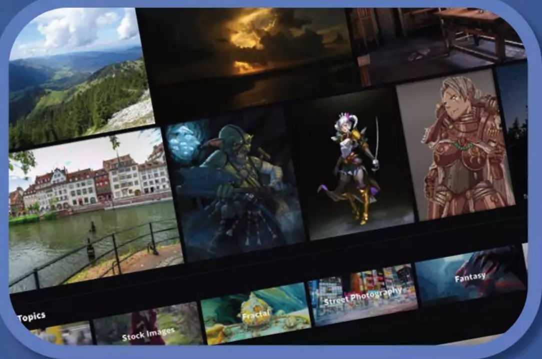


Your Questions Answered

There may be times when you encounter a situation that a manual doesn't cover. Or, you may just have some general questions about these applications that will help you going forward. Also, you may be encountering issues with the software that is puzzling you. Hopefully, the next few pages may be able to answer a couple of those questions and provide a resolution to them.


Topics
Stock Images
Fractal
Street Photography
Fantasy

Photoshop, Lightroom and Elements Q&A

When Photoshop arrived on the scene all those years ago, no-one could really have predicted just what a monumental impact it would have on the fields of design, photography, art, and of course, image manipulation. Be in no doubt that there is a lot to learn, but also comfort yourself in the knowledge that it is also easier to grasp the basics than you might think. In this section, we shall cover a Q&A session where we will try to answer some of the more common (and perhaps not so common) questions that users both new and old are asking. There are no silly questions, even experienced users don't know every single thing there is to know about Photoshop. We can speak from experience to that point. There's always something new to learn, some little trick or feature that we haven't tried before that can have an impact on how we work. There's also the general knowledge section of owning and using it that can be invaluable too. So, let's get started and canter through a number of Q&As. Some are relatively simple. Some may be commonly asked questions. Some might be quite random. Hopefully, all are useful in some way. Read on.

Q: What is the main difference between Photoshop and Lightroom?

A: New users are sometimes caught out between what one program can offer over the other and what kinds of work can be done with them. This was particularly true a while back when you had some disconcerting naming conventions that gave you: Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Photoshop Lightroom and Adobe Photoshop Elements. New users were not entirely sure what was what. Now we have: Adobe Photoshop CC, Adobe Lightroom Classic, Adobe Lightroom CC and Adobe Photoshop Elements. Let's try and break this down for you.

Adobe Photoshop is a pixel-based graphics editor. It uses layers and tools to enable you to manipulate photos, cut things out, paste others in and create entirely new works of art. It has become an industry standard for artists everywhere.

Adobe Photoshop Elements is also a graphics editor for hobbyists but where Photoshop is complex beast, Elements contains a number of the same features but presented in a much simpler way with a lot more automation provided for new users.

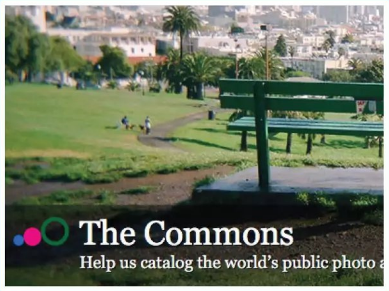
Adobe Lightroom Classic and its mobile-focused sibling Lightroom CC are used as a means to import, organise and find your digital photos. They offer image adjustments that use non-destructive methods to preserve your original file. Typically, photographers use Lightroom to catalog their images and edit them. Things such as brightness, contrast and saturation are applied to get the very best out of an image.

Q: Where can I get free pictures to practice Photoshop with?

A: Luckily, there are a number of great internet sites that make free images available to you. 'Free' can be a relative term, so make sure you check each site you visit for their licensing restrictions. For example, some can be free to download for personal use only, while others can be downloaded, used commercially or redistributed without any restrictions.

Flickr: The Commons

First port of call is Flickr: The Commons. Here you can browse through the world's public archives. Many museums, institutions and libraries make images available with no copyright, as do many Flickr users.

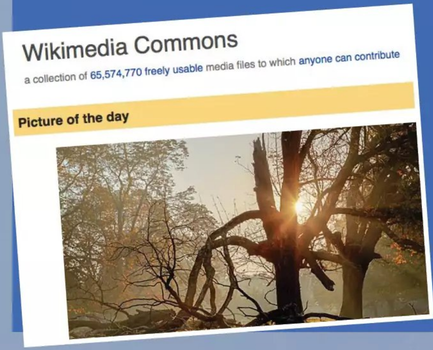


The Commons

Help us catalog the world's public photo a

Wikimedia Commons

A searchable library of images formed under the Wikipedia umbrella project. As well as their collection of photos, you can access videos, audio files and various media without restriction.



Wikimedia Commons

a collection of 65,574,770 freely usable media files to which anyone can contribute

Picture of the day

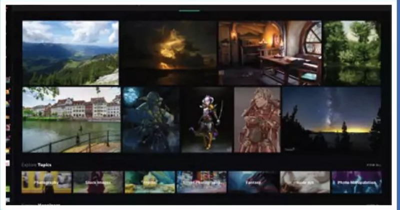
Q: Do I really have to pay a monthly subscription to use Adobe programs?

A: The short answer is yes, if you want the most up to date versions of these programs. Only Elements can be bought outright.

You can still purchase copies of Photoshop CS6, but Adobe no longer support it with new updates. Old pre-subscription copies of Lightroom are not available for purchase any more.

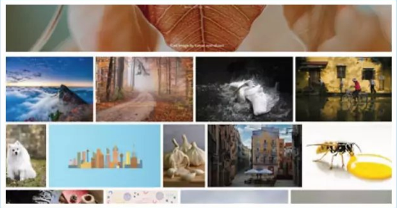
DeviantArt

Another huge repository of photographs, art and other media. Whilst a lot is free to use, artists will have individual restrictions on how their work is used. Check before you download anything.



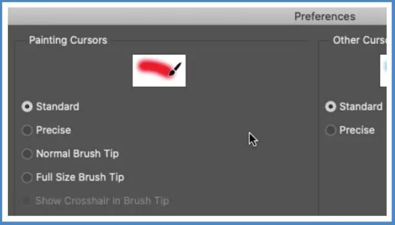
Pixabay

Packed with nearly 2 million stock photos and illustrations, this site allows all images to be used freely for any purpose with no attribution required, although a thank you posted on the artist's profile page wouldn't go amiss.



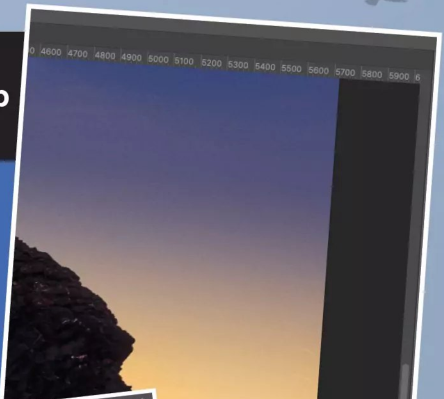
Q: In Photoshop, my cursor sometimes changes shape. Why does this happen?

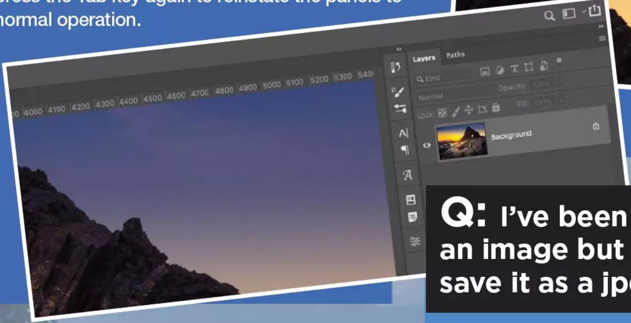
A: If you've been working with the type tool or any tool other than your brush, this can sometimes happen. If you've returned to the brush tool only to find that it has changed shape, then you may have possibly switched to the precise cursor option. All you have to do is press the Caps Lock button on your keyboard to return to your standard cursor. Pressing Cmd + K will take you to the preferences panel where you can also specify more cursor parameters.


Preferences
Painting Cursors
● Standard
○ Precise
○ Normal Brush Tip
○ Full Size Brush Tip
Show Crosshair in Brush Tip
Other Curs
● Standard
○ Precise

Q: All my panels have disappeared from the Photoshop workspace. What did i do?

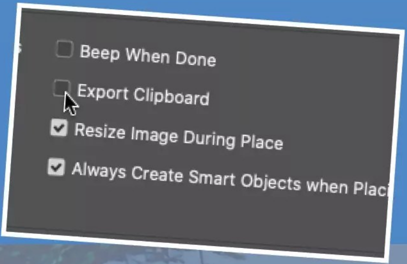
A: We've done this ourselves any number of times by accident. An inadvertent press of the Tab key will hide all your panels to maximise the workspace. A quick glance at either side of the workspace area will show two thin panel. If you hover your cursor over them, the panels will pop out for you to use and then hide themselves again when you move the cursor off them. Just press the Tab key again to reinstate the panels to normal operation.




Layers
Paths
Background

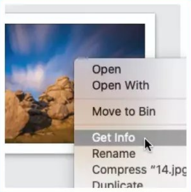
Q: I keep getting a Clipboard Export error when switching to another program. Can it be stopped?

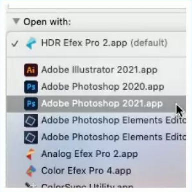
A: If you are experiencing the clipboard error, press Cmd + K to open up your preferences panel and click on the General option. Here you will find the Export Clipboard option. Make sure it is unchecked. This means any Photoshop clipboard data you have is unable to be pasted outside Photoshop. You are still able to paste clipboard data into Photoshop from outside.


☐ Beep When Done
☐ Export Clipboard
☑ Resize Image During Place
☑ Always Create Smart Objects when Plac

Q: Jpeg files used to open in Photoshop when I double-clicked them, now they open in another program. How do I change that?

A: The most likely answer is that you may have installed a new program that has taken over the file association for your images. Using your file browser on a PC or Finder on a Mac, navigate to an image file that is opening in the wrong program. On a PC, right-click on it and the select Open With > Choose Default Program. From there you can select which app to associate with that file type. On a Mac, find a file with the wrong association and highlight it. Click the Get Info button (Cmd + I) in the info panel that appears click the Open With menu. Al its of applications will be displayed. Click on the Photoshop app and below that click the Change All button. This ensures all images of that file type will now be associated with Photoshop by default.


Open
Open With
Move to Bin
Get Info
Rename
Compress "14.jpg
Duplicate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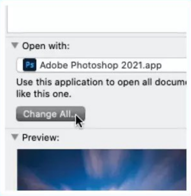
Adobe Illustrator 2021.app
Adobe Photoshop 2020.app
Adobe Photoshop 2021.app
Adobe Photoshop Elements Edito
Adobe Photoshop Elements Edito
Analog Efex Pro 2.app
Color Efex Pro 4.app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Change All...
Preview:

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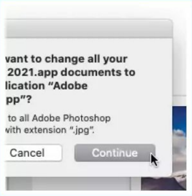


vant to change all your 2021.app documents to lication "Adobe pp"?

to all Adobe Photoshop vith extension ".jpg".

Cancel
Continue

Q: I've been working on an image but why can't I save it as a jpeg?

A: There are a couple of things you need to check. Firstly, if you have added layers either intentionally or by accident, it will want you to save it as a layered .PSD file unless you tell it otherwise. You also need to check what colour mode you're in . If for some reason the mode has been changed to 32 Bits/Channel, jpeg is not a format option to save in. Go to Image > Mode and check out the dropdown menu. Typically, a normal jpeg image is in 8 Bits/Channel mode. One other thing to check is the overall file size of the image. Very large images, those that might be in 32 Bits/Channel mode, or documents comprised of many layers and effects will only allow them to be saved in other formats such as Photoshop Raw and large format .PSB files.

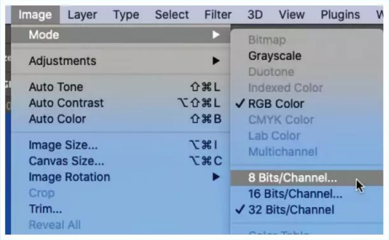
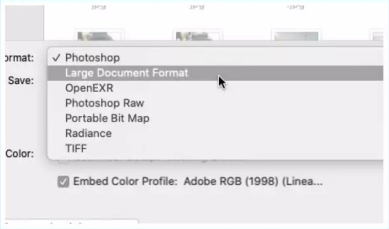
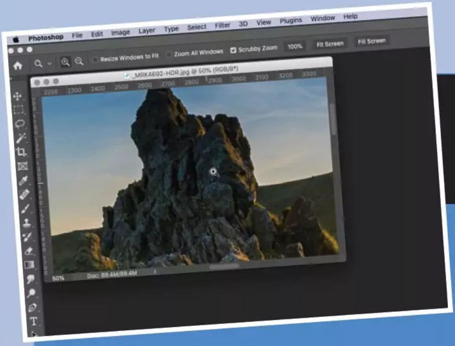


Image
Layer
Type
Select
Filter
3D
View
Plugins
Mode
Adjustments
Auto Tone ⇧⌘L
Auto Contrast ⌥⇧⌘L
Auto Color ⇧⌘B
Image Size... ⌥⌘I
Canvas Size... ⌥⌘C
Image Rotation
Crop
Trim...
Reveal All
Bitmap
Grayscale
Duotone
Indexed Color
✓ RGB Color
CMYK Color
Lab Color
Multichannel
8 Bits/Channel...
16 Bits/Channel...
✓ 32 Bits/Channel

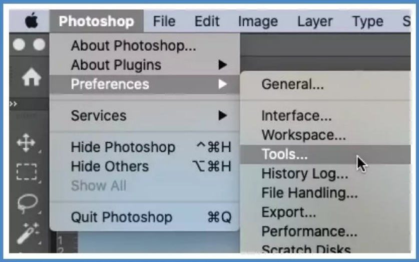

ormat:
Save:
Color:
✓ Photoshop
Large Document Format
OpenEXR
Photoshop Raw
Portable Bit Map
Radiance
TIFF

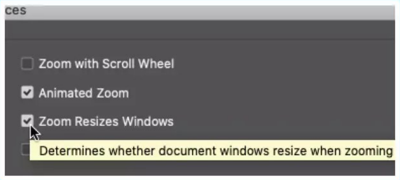
☑ Embed Color Profile: Adobe RGB (1998) (Linea...



Q: When I zoom an image in Photoshop, the window remains the same size and I have to scale it manually to see the picture in full. Is there a way around that problem?

A: That's an easy one to remedy. It sounds like the Zoom Resizes Windows button may not be active. Press Cmd + K to bring your preferences up and go to the Tools section. Here you'll see the Zoom Resizes Windows option. Make sure it is checked and now your window will scale as you zoom your image until you reach the limit of the available workspace. Alternatively, you can dock the document window to the workspace. Drag the document to the edge of the workspace until you see a blue line appear. Let go of the mouse and the document window is now docked to the workspace and remains the same size even if you reduce the image to a very small size.


Photoshop
File
Edit
Image
Layer
Type
About Photoshop...
About Plugins
Preferences
Services
Hide Photoshop ^⌘H
Hide Others ⌥⌘H
Show All
Quit Photoshop ⌘Q
General...
Interface...
Workspace...
Tools...
History Log...
File Handling...
Export...
Performance...
Scratch Disks

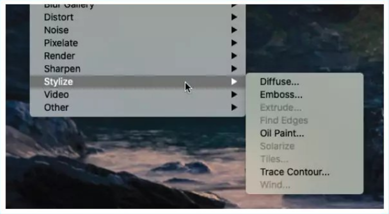


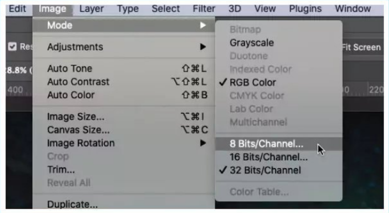
☐ Zoom with Scroll Wheel
☑ Animated Zoom
☑ Zoom Resizes Windows

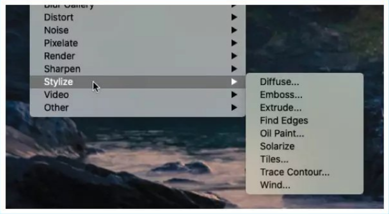
Determines whether document windows resize when zooming

Q: Why are certain filters and options greyed out on certain images? Others seem to work fine.

A: You'll need to double check your image and what bit depth it has been saved as. Typically if your image shows a bit depth of 16 Bits/Channel or 32 Bits/Channel, then certain filters and functions will not work. You'll need to go to Image > Mode and set the bit depth to 8 Bits/Channel. Then they should work fine.

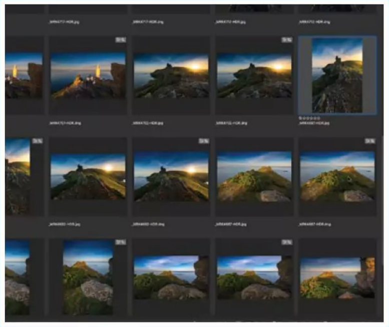

Distort
Noise
Pixelate
Render
Sharpen
Stylize
Video
Other
Diffuse...
Emboss...
Extrude...
Find Edges
Oil Paint...
Solarize
Tiles...
Trace Contour...
Wind...

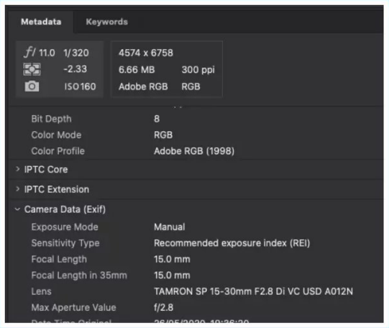

Edit
Image
Layer
Type
Select
Filter
3D
View
Plugins
Window
Mode
Adjustments
Auto Tone ⇧⌘L
Auto Contrast ⌥⇧⌘L
Auto Color ⇧⌘B
Image Size... ⌥⌘I
Canvas Size... ⌥⌘C
Image Rotation
Crop
Trim...
Reveal All
Duplicate...
Bitmap
Grayscale
Duotone
Indexed Color
✓ RGB Color
CMYK Color
Lab Color
Multichannel
8 Bits/Channel...
16 Bits/Channel...
✓ 32 Bits/Channel
Color Table...
Fit Screen


Distort
Noise
Pixelate
Render
Sharpen
Stylize
Video
Other
Diffuse...
Emboss...
Extrude...
Find Edges
Oil Paint...
Solarize
Tiles...
Trace Contour...
Wind...

Q: I'm new to Photoshop. After installing it I also have an application called Adobe Bridge. What is it for?

A: Very simply put, Adobe Bridge is a neat asset management program that lets you preview, catalog, keyword and search through your image and asset library. You can also add metadata, rename files in bulk and launch Photoshop.




Metadata
Keywords

f/ 11.0 1/320
-2.33
ISO 160
4574 x 6758
6.66 MB 300 ppi
Adobe RGB RGB

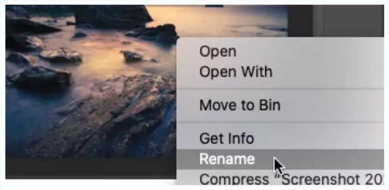
Bit Depth	8
Color Mode	RGB
Color Profile	Adobe RGB (1998)

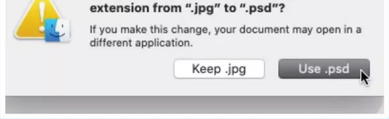
› IPTC Core
› IPTC Extension
⌄ Camera Data (Exif)

Exposure Mode	Manual
Sensitivity Type	Recommended exposure index (REI)
Focal Length	15.0 mm
Focal Length in 35mm	15.0 mm
Lens	TAMRON SP 15-30mm F2.8 Di VC USD A012N
Max Aperture Value	f/2.8

Q: I've saved a jpeg from Photoshop. When I try to open it, it says 'Could not open "xxx.jpg" because an unknown or invalid JPEG marker is found. What has happened to the file?

A: This is another irritation that can befall you sometimes. This usually comes about because even though you saved it with a .jpg filename, you have have saved it in a .PSD format. In the most recent version of Photoshop, it will warn you that you are trying to name a file incorrectly. If you have older versions of Photoshop like CS6, this can be a common occurrence. Navigate to the problematic file and rename the file and change the .jpg extension to .psd. You'll be asked to confirm this, so click OK. The file will be renamed and you should now be able to open the file again in Photoshop.


Open
Open With
Move to Bin
Get Info
Rename
Compress "Screenshot 20



Are you sure you want to change the extension from ".jpg" to ".psd"?

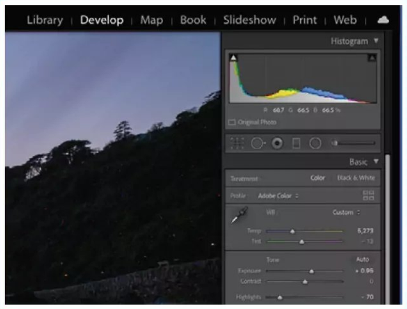
If you make this change, your document may open in a different application.

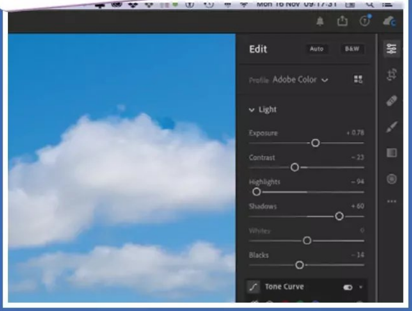
Keep .jpg
Use .psd

Q: Which version of Lightroom is better; Lightroom Classic or CC?

A: This might be more about how serious you are about image processing. Over the last couple of years, Adobe have renamed and revamped Lightroom to the point it now exists as two versions. Lightroom Classic is an advanced desktop-focussed version with a complete set of modules that allow the series photographer to get the most out of their images. Lightroom CC is a pared down mobile version that offers more basic controls to edit your photos. It is arguably considered an entry level application for photo processing and adjustment.

LrC
Adobe Photoshop Lightroom Classic
Adobe Creative Cloud
Lr
Adobe Photoshop Lightroom
© 1992-2021 Adobe. All rights reserved.
Adobe Creative Cloud

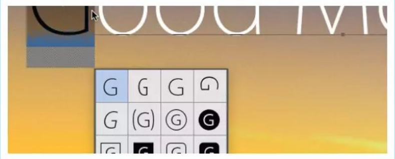

Library | Develop | Map | Book | Slideshow | Print | Web
Histogram
Basic

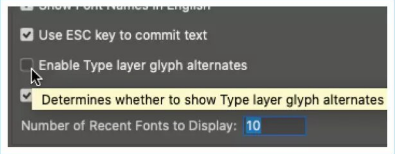

Edit
Auto
B&W
Profile Adobe Color
Light
Tone Curve

Exposure +0.78
Contrast -23
Highlights -94
Shadows +60
Whites 0
Blacks -14

Q: When editing text in Photoshop, a small panel of alternate text characters keeps appearing. This is a bit annoying, can I easily turn this off?

A: Yes you can. This small flyout panel is a quick method of showing you alternative characters and symbols. If you don't want this panel to appear whilst editing text, go to Photoshop > Preferences > Type and find the check box named Enable Type Layer Glyph Alternatives and make sure it is unchecked. The text flyout box will be disabled after that.

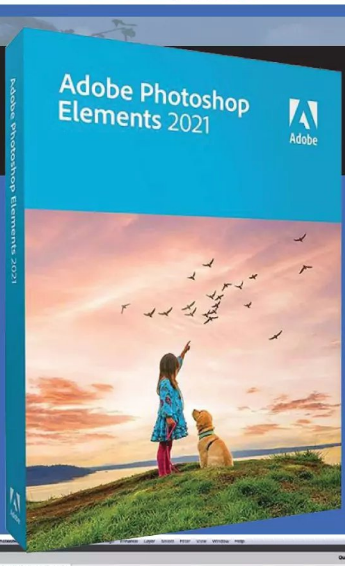




☑ Use ESC key to commit text
☐ Enable Type layer glyph alternates
Determines whether to show Type layer glyph alternates
Number of Recent Fonts to Display: 10

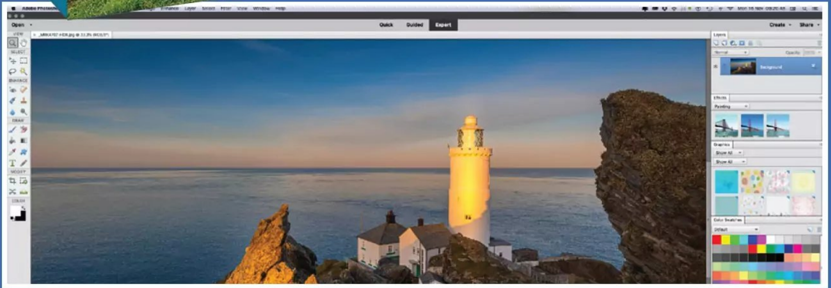
Q: Am I only able to open raw files in Lightroom for image processing?

A: Not at all. While it's true that Lightroom primarily supports a large number of native camera raw formats such as Canon's CR2 format, Nikon's NEF format and the Olympus ORF format, you can also open PNG, TIFF, JPEG and DNG formats too. Lightroom also supports Photoshop's own PSD document format too.


Adobe Photoshop Elements 2021
Adobe

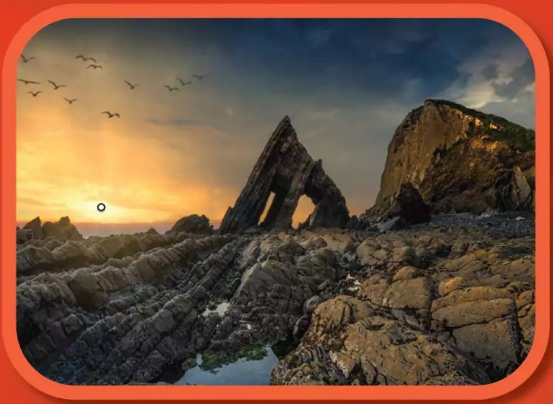
Q: Do I need Photoshop if I already have a copy of Photoshop Elements?

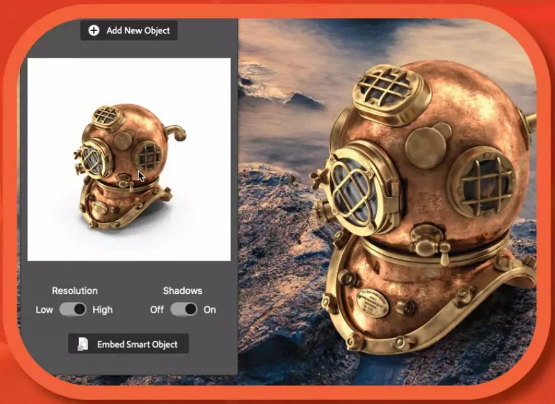
A: That really depends on whether the tools provided by Elements continue to fulfil your image editing requirements. Elements can be purchased outright and does not require a monthly subscription, which makes it an attractive proposition. It is less expensive than Photoshop, but this means that it has a number of limitations and has less features and advanced options. If you use Elements and find yourself always in need of greater creative functionality, then Photoshop is your next upgrade path. Otherwise, sticking with Elements continues to make sense.


Quick
Guided
Expert

Plugins Round-up

Plugins are small, self-contained programs that add extra effects and workflow possibilities to the Photoshop toolset. They are supplied by Adobe themselves and by many third-party vendors. If you are just dabbling and want to have some fun, or if you are a serious digital artist or photographer, we're sure there's a perfect plugin just to suit you. Here, we have a few that may be of interest to you.



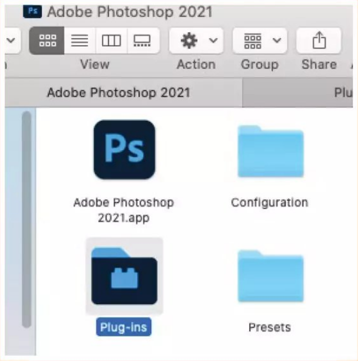

Add New Object
Resolution
Low
High
Shadows
Off
On
Embed Smart Object

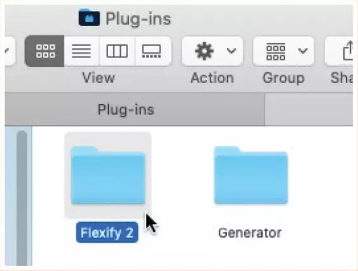
Get switched on with plugins

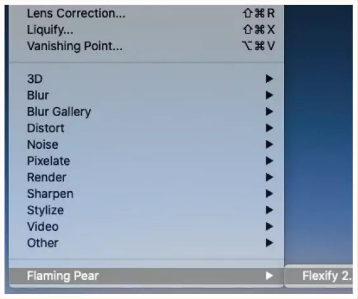
As we've already noted, there are so many plugins available, it can be a chore to wade through them all to figure out what is best for you. Moreover, you need to be aware of what versions of Photoshop any particular plugin is compatible with. Some are fairly universal, others may need updated plugins. When purchasing, double-check version numbers to avoid disappointment. Before we dive in and regale you with some prime plugin choices. We thought we'd cover the main question asked by anyone new to plugins. If you've downloaded one, you have to get it installed. How do you do it? Well, there are a couple of ways you can approach it, it's pretty easy so here goes.

Manual install

First things first is to download your plugin. It may be in a compressed format such as a zip file. Unpack the ZIP file. Then copy the unpacked folder. Then you need to navigate to the folder that contains the Photoshop plugins. Paste your copied plugin into Photoshop's plugins folder. Start your version of Photoshop. Click on the Filter menu. At the bottom should be the name of the plugin you just pasted into Photoshop's plugins folder. Click it to open and enjoy.

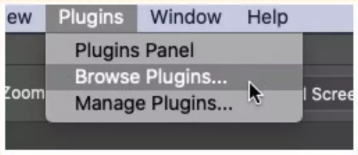

Adobe Photoshop 2021
View
Action
Group
Share
Adobe Photoshop 2021
Adobe Photoshop 2021.app
Configuration
Plug-ins
Presets

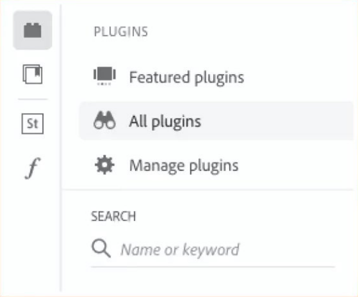

Plug-ins
View
Action
Group
Plug-ins
Flexify 2
Generator

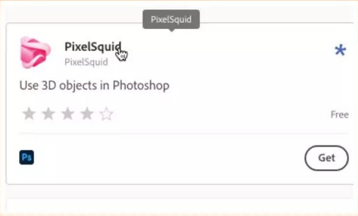

Lens Correction... ⇧⌘R
Liquify... ⇧⌘X
Vanishing Point... ⌥⌘V
3D
Blur
Blur Gallery
Distort
Noise
Pixelate
Render
Sharpen
Stylize
Video
Other
Flaming Pear
Flexify 2...

Photoshop install

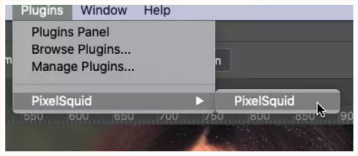
The latest versions of Photoshop CC lets you browse, install and manage plugins from a handy interface. From the top menu, select Plugins > Browse Plugins. This will bring up your Creative Cloud app. Here you can browse for free or paid plugins and install them with ease. For example, we clicked on the PixelSquid 3D objects browser. You can view details about the plugin of your choice and then download it. Once downloaded, you can go back to the plugins menu and your downloaded plugin will displayed at the bottom. Click on it to activate it. That's all there is to it.


Plugins
Window
Help
Plugins Panel
Browse Plugins...
Manage Plugins...


PLUGINS
Featured plugins
All plugins
Manage plugins
SEARCH
Name or keyword

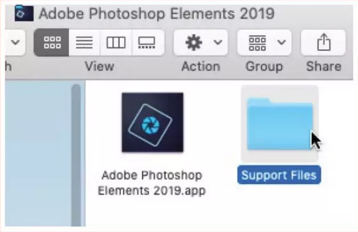

PixelSquid
PixelSquid
PixelSquid
Free
Get

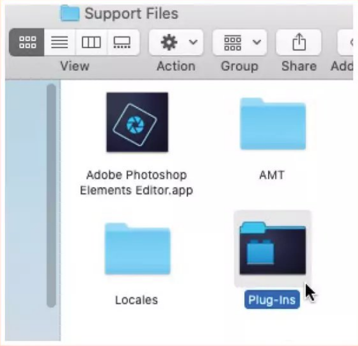
Use 3D objects in Photoshop

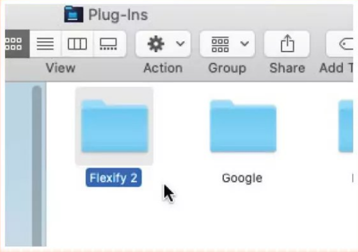

Plugins
Window
Help
Plugins Panel
Browse Plugins...
Manage Plugins...
PixelSquid
PixelSquid

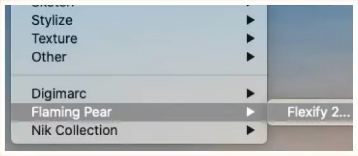
Elements install

Installing plugins on Elements is a similar process to Photoshop's manual install. In this case, the target plugins folder is found within the Adobe Photoshop Elements Support Files folder. Paste your downloaded plugin and restart Elements. The new plugin should be visible at the bottom of the Filter menu.


Adobe Photoshop Elements 2019
View
Action
Group
Share
Adobe Photoshop Elements 2019.app
Support Files


Support Files
View
Action
Group
Share
Adobe Photoshop Elements Editor.app
AMT
Locales
Plug-Ins


Plug-Ins
View
Action
Group
Share
Flexify 2
Google


Stylize
Texture
Other
Digimarc
Flaming Pear
Nik Collection
Flexify 2...

Luminar 4

30 day money back period. **£81 for 1 license.**

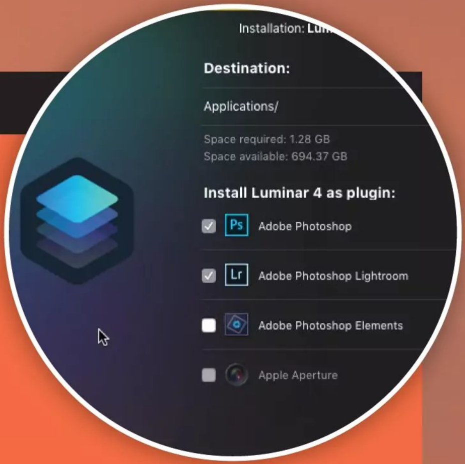
This is a fully featured creative photo editor, and a powerful one at that. Luminar is designed to work as either a standalone product or as a plugin for Photoshop and Lightroom. It is a photo editor, browser and raw processing application all in one package. It is packed with impressive tools to turn your favourite photos into creative works of art. Luminar is designed to be as intuitive as possible, meaning you can fire it up and master its controls very quickly. The learning curve is not too steep and you can happily spend more time creating than scratching your head wondering what to next.

Moreover, Luminar is not a subscription-based product. You pay for it outright and then it's yours. At £81, it represents a good deal considering how much you get for such a relatively small outlay.

At its simplest, it is a powerful raw processing application much like Lightroom offering non-destructive edits and endless methods of image adjustment. Beyond that, Luminar comes into its own by offering a wealth of creative options and manipulation tools that will keep you busy for ages. You can use the browser to organise your photos and then begin work on your chosen edit. Using the AI Sky Replacement Tool, you can instantly change a sky to better suit the mood of the picture. The algorithms built into the application can accurately drop a new sky into your photo taking care not to remove small details like leaves and grass. If you want. you can even relight the scene for a totally new look. All the effects you bring to bear on your images can be added as layers, which gives you a lot of control and non-destructive editing to boot.

Portrait photographers also have an amazing set of tools to enhance their subjects with AI Skin Enhancer and Portrait Enhancer. It can quickly and accurately remove unwanted blemishes but preserves all the important stuff like pores and hair. Again, clever algorithms save you time. No complex masking is needed, but you have the option to tweak any of the edits if you want.

With Luminar, you can drop additional objects into your photos, add sunrays, or just extract as much detail from an image as you desire. If you have unwanted objects in a photo, then the Erase tool will make short work of removing them. Add to that a noise reduction tool, a large number of creative presets called 'Looks' and a landscape enhancer, you have a very powerful photo editor on your hands that could have a major impact on how you approach your workflow.



Installation: Lum

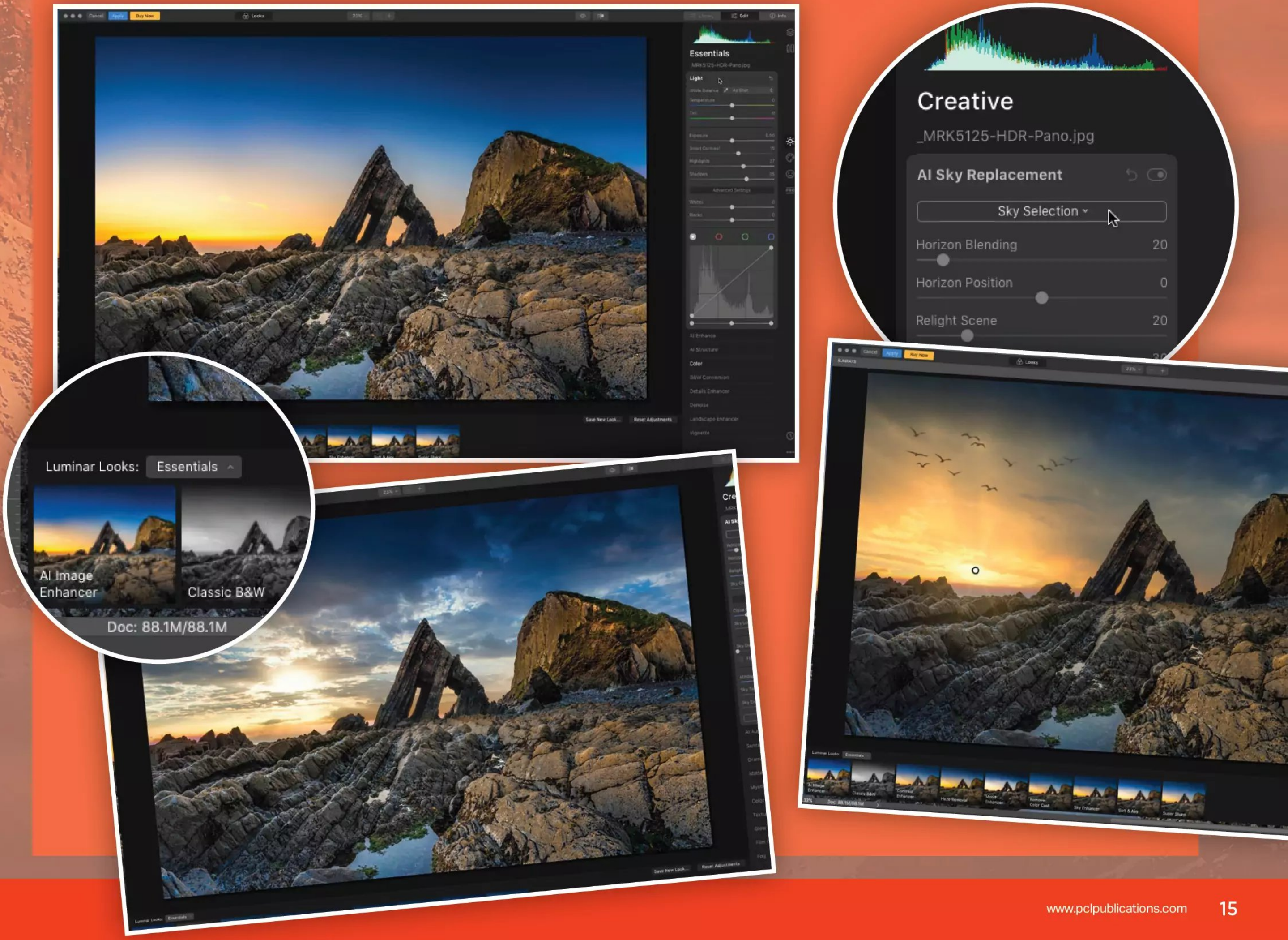
Destination:

Applications/

Space required: 1.28 GB
Space available: 694.37 GB

Install Luminar 4 as plugin:

☑ Adobe Photoshop
☑ Adobe Photoshop Lightroom
☐ Adobe Photoshop Elements
☐ Apple Aperture



Creative

_MRK5125-HDR-Pano.jpg

AI Sky Replacement

Sky Selection

Horizon Blending 20

Horizon Position 0

Relight Scene 20

Luminar Looks: Essentials

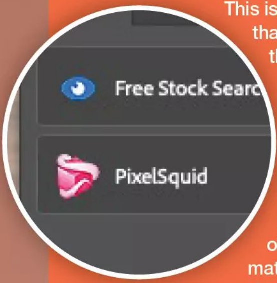
AI Image Enhancer

Classic B&W

Doc: 88.1M/88.1M

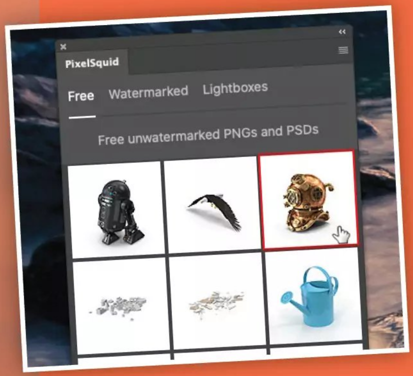
PixelSquid

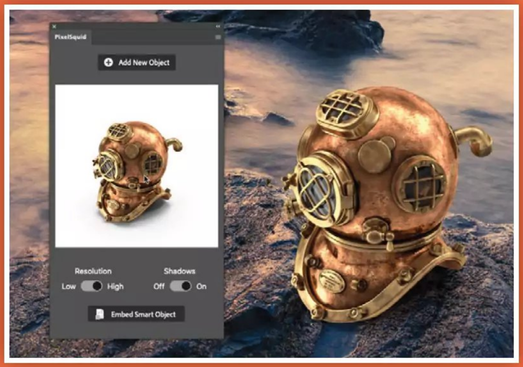
Free with limited object choice. **$199 per year for access to all 3D assets.**

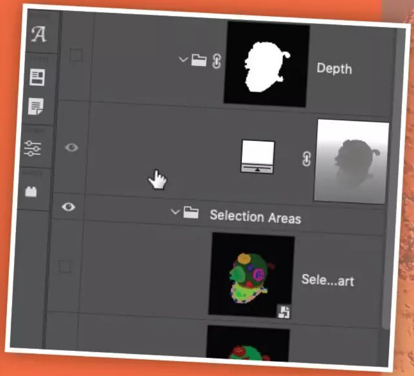

Free Stock Searc
PixelSquid

This is a 3D asset browser that gives you access to the tens of thousands of design objects PixelSquid have available. They are fully realised 3D objects that you can spin around as if it were a solid object so it better matches the orientation needed to fit your image requirements. You can use the free version which gives you access to over a hundred free objects, as well as watermarked versions of everything else in their library. You will need to create an account but it is easy to set up and ready in minutes. To use un-watermarked versions, you will need to upgrade to their subscription service which runs at $199 per year. Personally, we feel this is a little steep for a niche product, but if you require the use of 3D objects in your projects on a regular basis, then the cost is a little more justified.

You simply fire up the plugin and choose which object you want to appear in your document. Place your chosen object and scale it to the required size. You have the options to choose low resolution or high resolution 3D objects and whether you want the object to cast shadows. In the PixelSquid preview window, you can rotate and angle the object to help it match the perspective present in your photo. The object in your document will update to match the preview. When you have the object just as you want it, you can click the Embed Smart Object button and a layered PSD will be created which gives you a lot of control over the object in terms of layered effects, selection areas, depth mapping, shadows and fog. Be aware that the high resolution objects can slow your machine down if it is a little underpowered. This is a fun little plugin. The main downfall is that you cannot light the objects to match the lighting in your photo for added realism, but if you wanted to get down and dirty with the layered PSD file, you can no doubt introduce some more shadows to help your image blend in better.


PixelSquid
Free
Watermarked
Lightboxes
Free unwatermarked PNGs and PSDs


PixelSquid
Add New Object
Resolution
Low
High
Shadows
Off
On
Embed Smart Object

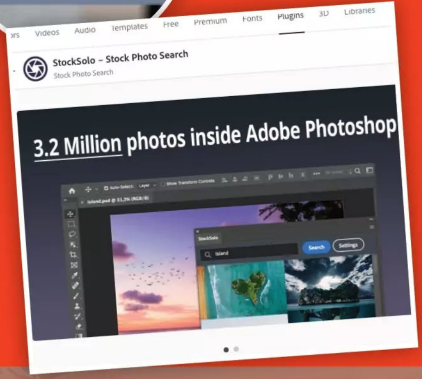

Depth
Selection Areas
Sele...art

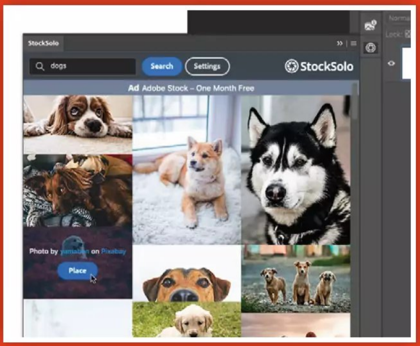
StockSolo

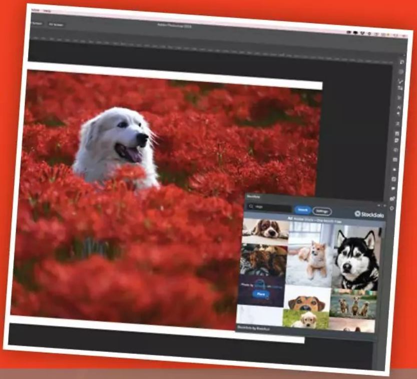
Free to use. **No restrictions on photos.**

StockSolo is a stock photography library search engine that gives you access to many thousands of photos that are free for personal and commercial use. No subscription is required and you have immediate access to countless high quality, full resolution images with no restrictions. You can download the Photoshop plugin and install it. When you start up Photoshop, you can find the plugin under Plugins > StockSolo. The plugin activates and you can browse or search by keyword for images. StockSolo has the option to search for free images from a number of stock library sites. At the time of writing, it allows you to search Pixabay, Pexels and Unsplash. You simply put a subject name in the search field and hit Search to access the libraries of the stock image sites. If you create a blank document of a certain size (say 3000 pixels by 2000 pixels), when you find an image you like, click on the Place button and it will be downloaded and inserted at the correct size to fill your document. Images are dowloaded as Smart Objects which you can rasterize if you so wish.

This is a very handy little plugin and lets you quickly find and download images directly into your documents. Given that you have access to all those free, high-resolution photos from a free plugin, what's not to like?


Videos
Audio
Templates
Free
Premium
Fonts
Plugins
3D
Libraries
StockSolo – Stock Photo Search
Stock Photo Search
3.2 Million photos inside Adobe Photoshop

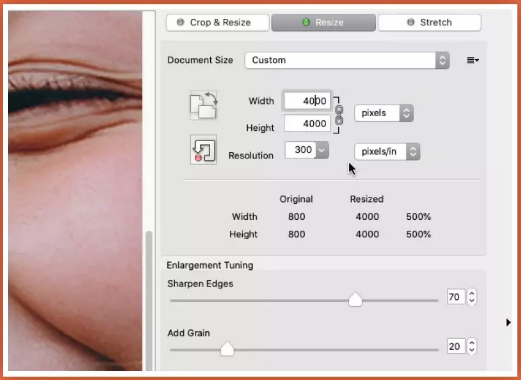

StockSolo
dogs
Search
Settings
StockSolo
Ad Adobe Stock – One Month Free
Photo by
on Pixabay
Place



Blow Up 3 30 day trial. **$79 one off purchase.**

Reducing an image to a much smaller size presents no problem in day to day use. A good original at 4000 pixels wide, when reduced to 800 pixels wide, will look fine. However, what happens if the reverse is true and you need to blow up a 800 pixel wide image to 4000? This is an extreme example, but of you are face with this dilemma, you have to scale the 800 pixels up and hope it comes out ok. Plugins like Blow Up 3 can help by using algorithms to upsample the image and retain as much detail and sharpness as possible. Of course, concessions have to be made since you are interpolating an image an injecting pixels where there were none to begin with. Results of the 800 pixel to 4000 pixel test were mixed, although some finer detail of the girl's hair was maintained, it still looked a little painterly and you could make out a definite repeating pattern through areas of similar tone. Adding a little more grain to the image before scaling helps to reduce the impact of the repeating pattern, but how much you add does come down to personal preference. Also bear in mind that the quality of the original image is the key to how well it can be enlarged. A compressed jpeg is going to suffer since all those inherent artefacts will result in greater predominance of the unwanted repeat pattern than you would like.

Starting with a larger original, we tried to scale an image from 3000 pixels to 6000 pixels. With a little finessing of the settings, the results proved to be quite acceptable. They'll never be archival quality, but if you need the extra pixels, then it is certainly an option. At $79 for such a niche plugin, we wonder if Photoshop's own resampling algorithms are similar enough to make you reconsider the value of this particular plugin.



Document Size: Custom

Width: 4000 pixels

Height: 4000

Resolution: 300 pixels/in

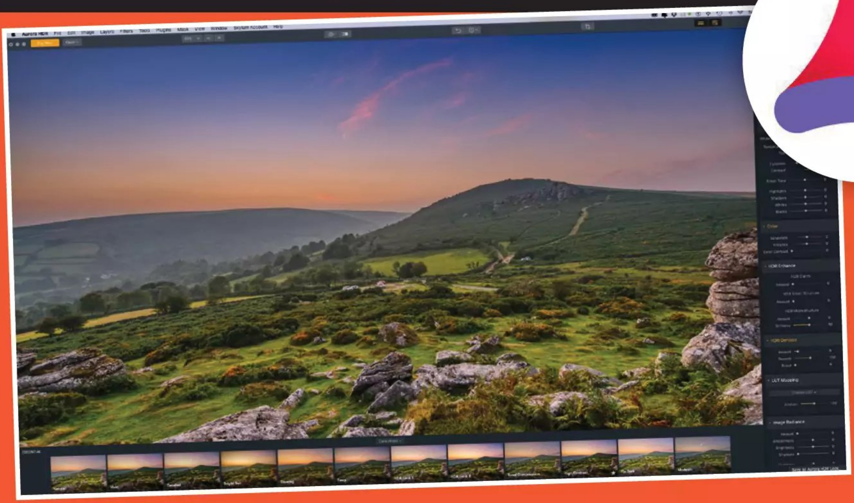
	Original	Resized	
Width	800	4000	500%
Height	800	4000	500%

Enlargement Tuning

Sharpen Edges: 70

Add Grain: 20

Aurora HDR 30 day money back period. **£92 for 5 licenses.**



High dynamic range (HDR) images are the result of combining 3 or more bracketed photos to give you a result that contains more tonal data that you can capture in one photo alone. Once you have your set of bracketed photos, you need to be able to combine them to create your final HDR image. There are plenty of applications out there to merge your photos and produce a final result. Photoshop and Lightroom are among them of course, but Aurora HDR is an advanced HDR creation package that gives you a huge amount of control over your images and is used by a number of industry leading photographers.

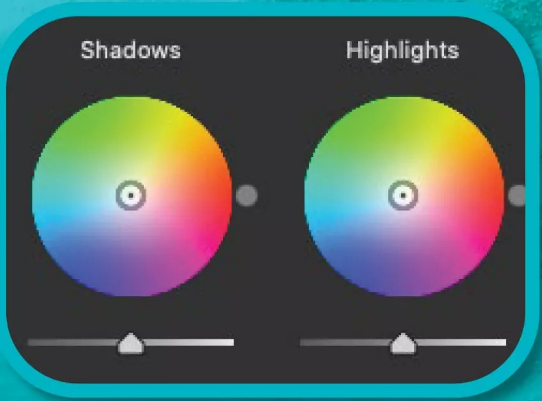
Aurora HDR works as both a Photoshop and Lightroom plugin as well as a standalone application. There's no subscription, it's just a one-time purchase and it's yours. Be aware of which versions of Photoshop and Lightroom it works with though. We tried the demo which didn't appear to work with Photoshop 2020, although the newer versions do according to the website. Presumably support for Photoshop 2021 is on the way. Until it is supported, you can of course run it in its standalone form anyway.

First off, if you don't have bracketed images, you can import one image and Aurora HDR will still be able to create an HDR image from that. Just be aware that if the sky of an image is far too overexposed and detail is lost, no amount of clever algorithms will save it. Although, if you've already read the review about Luminar 4, you do at least have the option to drop a completely new sky in there!

If you do have a bracketed sequence of images, then you can open these together and Aurora HDR will merge them automatically for you. It can align images, apply deghosting techniques to reduce the impact of any moving objects in the scene using one of the sequence images as a reference. You also have the option to apply a colour denoise filter and removal of chromatic aberrations in each image. Then the process of enhancing the result begins. You have a huge set of tools at your disposal that lets you bring out every last pixel of detail and tonal data. You can also layer your adjustments, add radial and gradient filters, choose from a number of presets and so on. You can even save your edits as a preset to apply to any subsequent images. It is certainly powerful and the control yo have is impressive. Beware though, it is all too easy to get a bit heavy handed with your edits. A good HDR is all about subtlety, so enjoy, but keep an eye on those edits.

Adobe Camera Raw

When you install Photoshop, you also get a very useful application called Camera Raw. It allows you to edit Raw files captured by digital cameras. A Raw file offers a higher quality than standard jpeg files. Think of Camera Raw as the little brother of Lightroom and offers you a digital darkroom where Raw files can be processed.



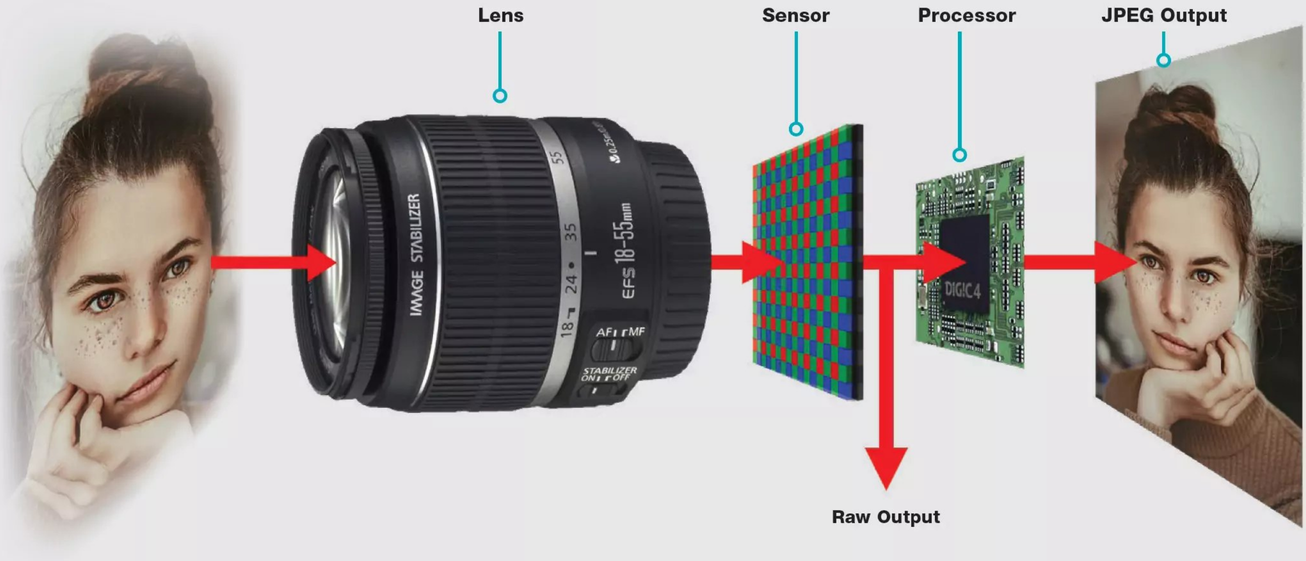
Processing Raw Files

For the best possible quality, shoot in Raw mode

MENU
INFO.
RATE
START/STOP
Image quality Standard
RAW 22M 5760x3840 [925]
RAW
RAW MRAW SRAW
JPEG
L L M M S1 S1 S2 S3
SET

All digital SLRs and Compact System Cameras, and most of the better compact cameras, have a shooting option called Raw mode. You'll usually find it in the menu as an option under image quality. Raw mode offers greatly improved image quality over the usual JPEG image file format, and is recommended for all serious photographers. Let's take a closer look at Raw mode, find out how it works and see how it can help you produce better photographs.

What is Raw Mode?

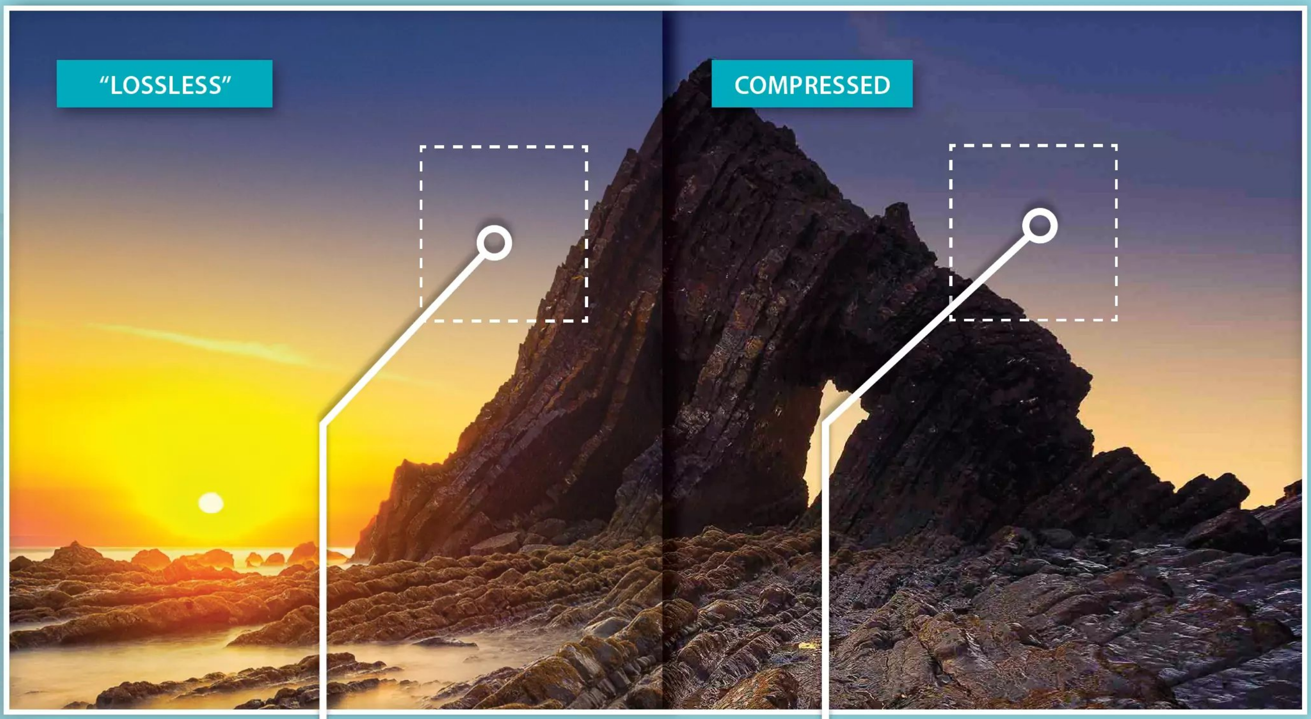


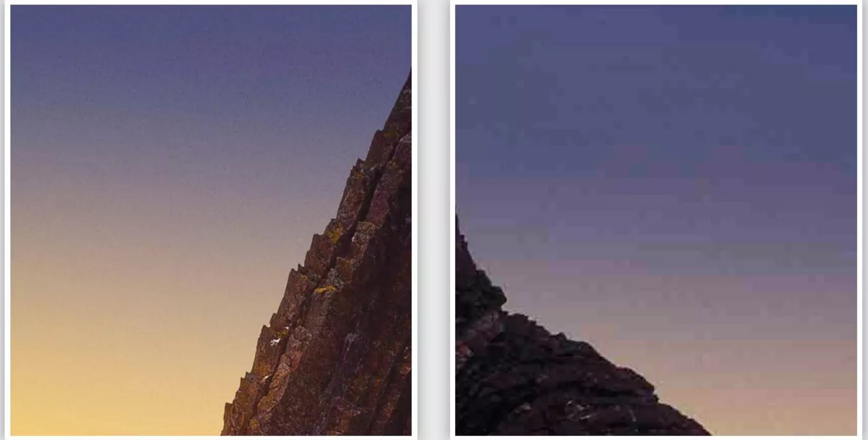
Raw mode is a special image recording option that is available on digital SLRs, Compact System Cameras, and other high-quality digital cameras. If your camera has this option, you have access to much higher image quality than the standard JPEG file format.

Essentially, Raw mode is just what it sounds like. It's the raw data pretty much straight from the camera's sensor. In a digital camera the photographic image is, as I'm sure you're aware, captured by an electronic image sensor. This sensor has millions of tiny photocells that produce a charge when they are exposed to light; the brighter the light, the higher the charge. Digital camera sensors don't record the colour of the light hitting them, just the brightness, so a special mosaic of coloured filters is placed in front of the sensor, called a Bayer filter.

Naturally, the image generated by the sensor and filter wouldn't make much sense to the unaided eye, so the signal from the sensor feeds into the camera's image processor, a combination of computer electronics and software which turns the brightness data from the sensor, adjusted for the colours in the Bayer filter, into a full colour digital image that you can view and print.

Part of that process includes reducing the bit-depth of the basic image data (the amount of 1s and 0s used by a computer to describe each pixel), usually from 36-bit (12 bits per channel)





or even 48-bit (16 bits per channel) to 24-bit (8 bits per channel), which makes a smaller and more easily processed file, but loses some colour depth because of the smaller palette that can be represented by that many bits. Other adjustments to the colour balance, such as unusual white balance settings, can also reduce image quality, as will heavy noise reduction.

In order to save space on the memory card, produce faster transfers and make it easier to display and print the photograph on a computer, the image is usually converted to a compressed JPEG file. Unfortunately JPEG compression also reduces the image quality, and can introduce artefacts into some areas of the image.

The main advantage of Raw shooting, apart from the improvement in overall image quality, is that it bypasses the in-camera image processing, such as white balance, saturation, sharpness etc. This sounds illogical, but it's not really. The processing that takes place in the camera is pre-set before the shot is taken, and irreversible once the image has been converted to a JPEG file. By shooting in Raw mode, you can make the processing adjustments after the shot has been taken, and if you need to change them you can do so as long as you have the original Raw file.

The downside to Raw file recording is of course that the saved files are much larger, so they take a lot longer to save to the memory card, and you can fit fewer of them on there. For a typical 16MP DSLR, a high quality JPEG file will be around 8MB, while a Raw file will be around 25MB, over three times the size.

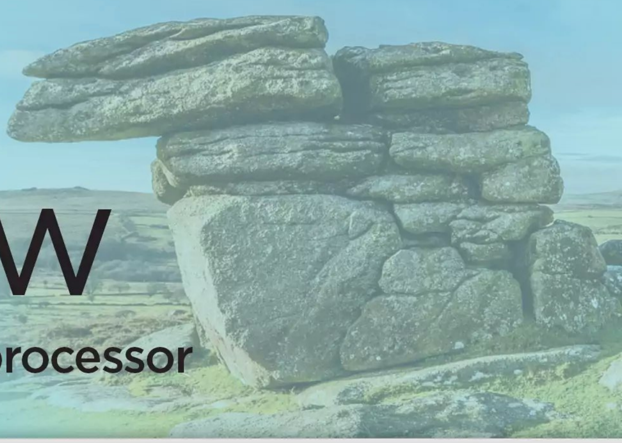
Many of the more recent DSLRs have the ability to record Raw and JPEG image files simultaneously. This has the advantage of the convenience of JPEG with the versatility and quality of Raw, but takes up even more space on your memory card. Fortunately the price of very large memory cards is falling almost daily, so this needn't be much of a problem.

USEFUL TIP

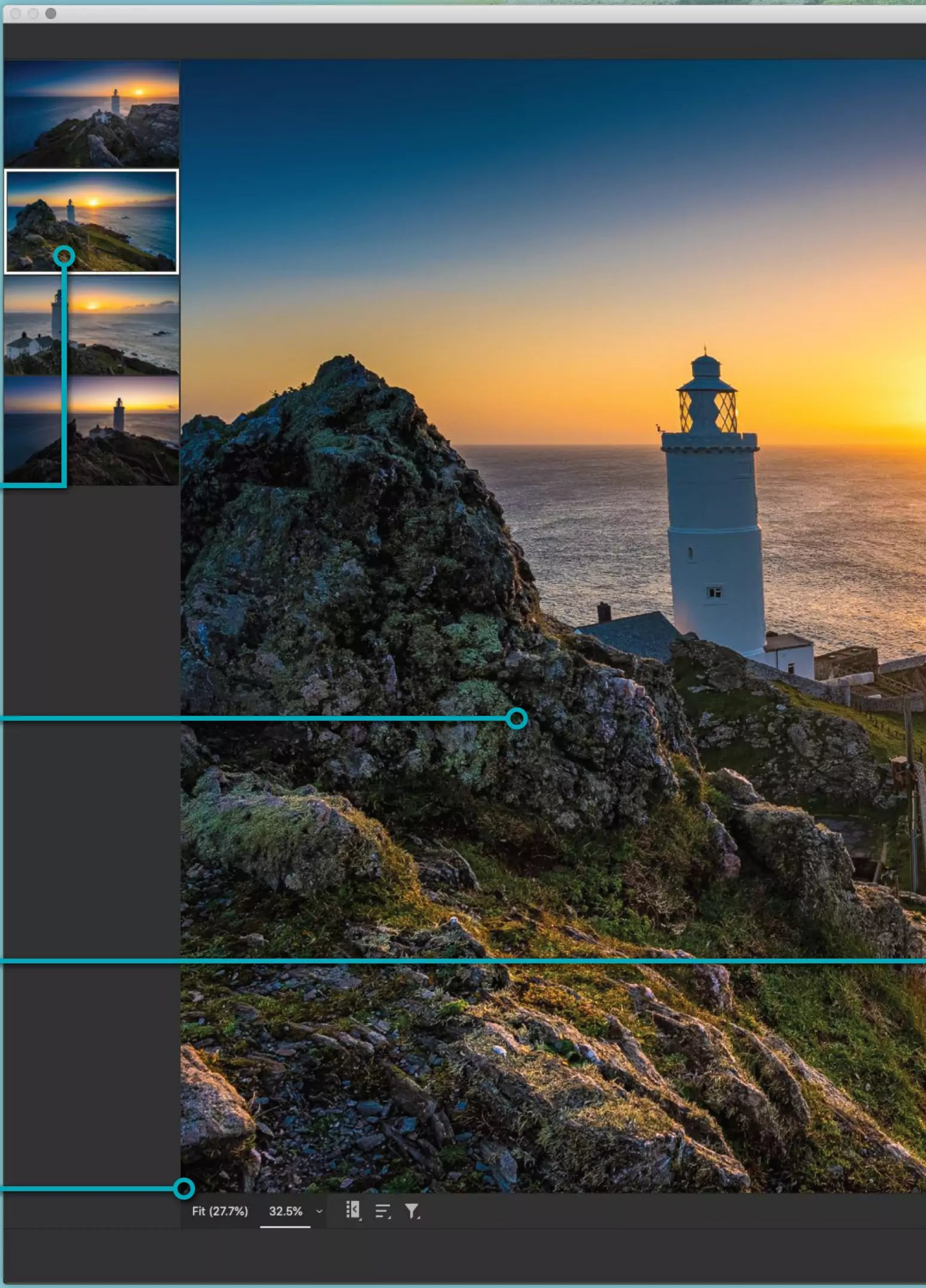
Modern cameras all come supplied with Raw processing software, although if you have Photoshop, it has Adobe Camera Raw built in as part of the application. Try to get used to always shooting in Raw mode on your camera. The quality and processing possibilities are much greater than JPEG files. These days, even some camera phones have the ability to shoot in Raw format. They are larger file sizes than JPEGs but the benefits become clear once you start to understand how much more processing ability you have. Your photos will see a marked improvement when you use Raw.

Camera Raw

The new look for Photoshop's Raw processor



Photoshop comes with Camera Raw as standard. It offers a range of processing options that enable you to get the best out of your photos, including exposure adjustment, sharpening, noise reduction, colour correction and automatic correction for lens distortion. It's regularly updated so it's compatible with the latest cameras and lenses. It recently underwent a major update and the layout has been redesigned to match the look of the mobile version of Lightroom.



Flimstrip

This shows all the files you currently have open in thumbnail format and is displayed on the left side of the screen. You can alter its orientation and display it along the bottom of the screen if preferred. Click the one you want to work on.

Image Window

The image you are currently working on is displayed here. All the changes and adjustments you make to the file is shown here in real time. If you alter the before and after view options the screen will be split in half accordingly.

Ratings and Preferences

The lower middle of the interface has a ratings panel so you can apply a star rating to each image you're working on. The small trashcan button will reset the rating to zero stars. Below that is a clickable link to Camera Raw's preferences.

Zoom and Orientation

The lower left area has two controls that let you control the amount of magnification of the currently active image that range from 6% to 1600%. Next to that is the show/hide Filmstrip button and orientation options.

Control Tabs

The user interface breaks the workflow down into discrete sections, each with its own tabbed palette of controls and adjustment sliders. Switch between them by clicking on their name to expand each panel such as Basic and Curve.

Info, Edit, Profile

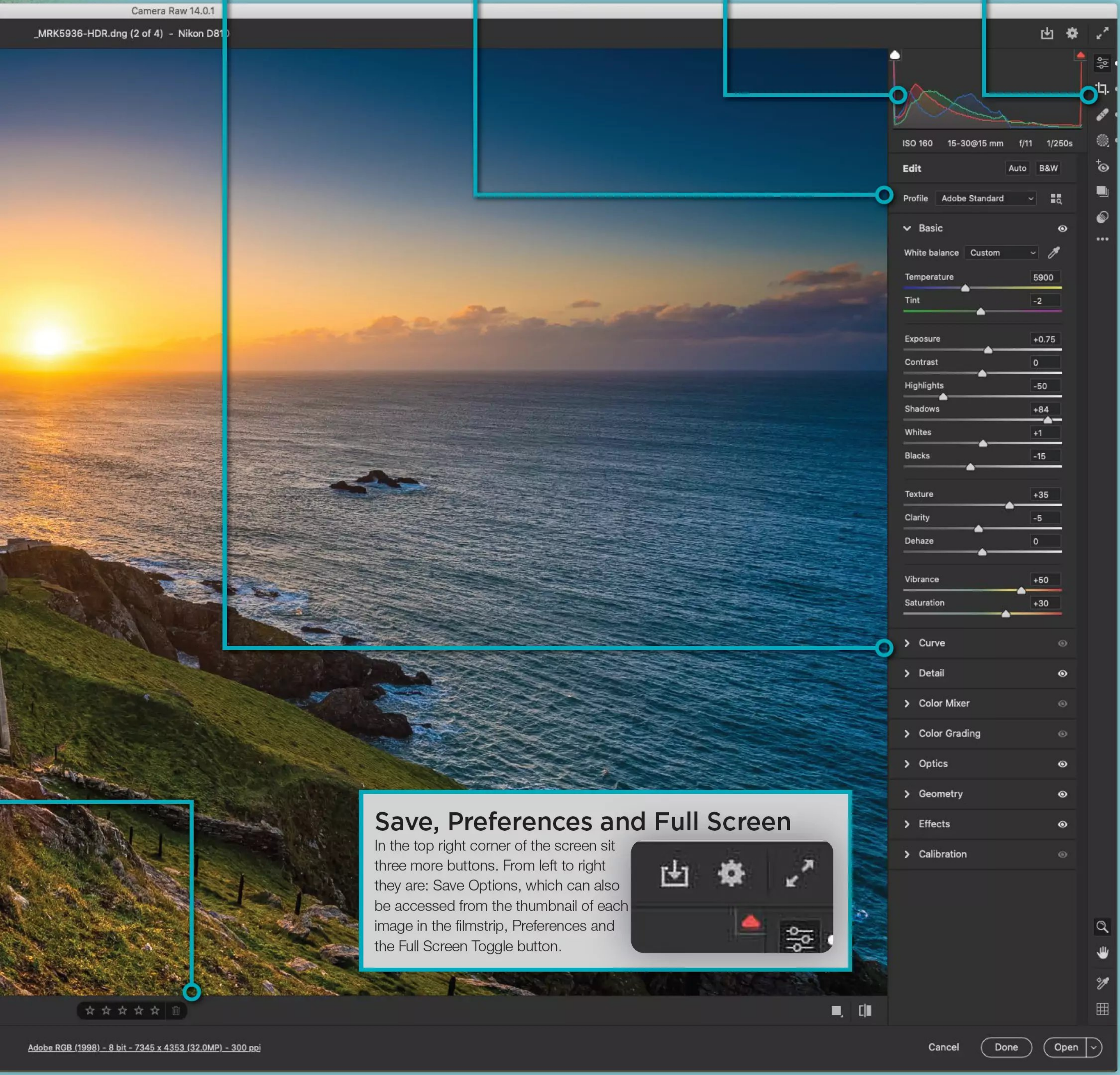
Below the Histogram are three small panels. The first displays information about the camera settings used. The second lets you choose if you are using Auto or B&W colour settings. The third is the colour profile selector and browser.

Histogram

This displays the distribution of tones in your image and changes as you apply different exposure and colour adjustments. Darkest tones are on the left of the graph and brightest on the right. It displays RGB colours and the combined colours.

Toolbar

This holds all the main selectable tools including Edit, Crop and Rotate, Spot Removal and Masking. The options for the tool you select will be displayed in the main control tab panel to the left of the toolbar and changes with each tool you choose.


Camera Raw 14.0.1

_MRK5936-HDR.dng (2 of 4) - Nikon D81

ISO 160 15-30@15 mm f/11 1/250s

Edit: Auto, B&W

Profile: Adobe Standard

Basic

White balance: Custom

Temperature: 5900

Tint: -2

Exposure: +0.75

Contrast: 0

Highlights: -50

Shadows: +84

Whites: +1

Blacks: -15

Texture: +35

Clarity: -5

Dehaze: 0

Vibrance: +50

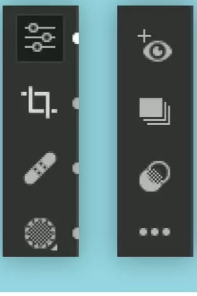
Saturation: +30

Adobe RGB (1998) - 8 bit - 7345 x 4353 (32.0MP) - 300 ppi

Save, Preferences and Full Screen

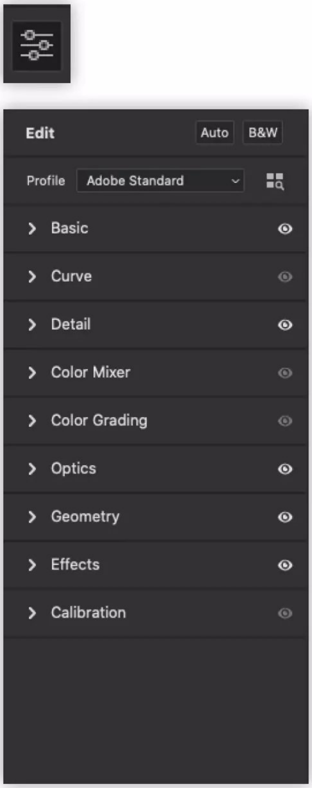
In the top right corner of the screen sit three more buttons. From left to right they are: Save Options, which can also be accessed from the thumbnail of each image in the filmstrip, Preferences and the Full Screen Toggle button.

The Toolbar



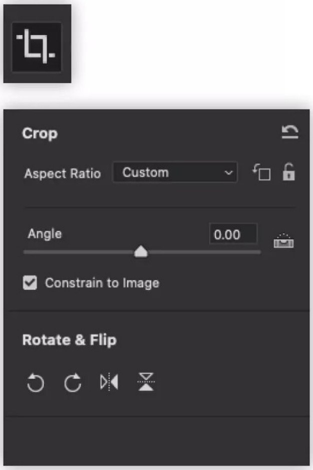
Get to know all the tools you have at your disposal in the current version of Camera Raw

The Toolbar in the newly updated layout of Camera Raw sits vertically in the top right side of the interface. It is broken down into a series of buttons that you can click. Each button you click, will display its particular tools in the main control panel situated right next to the Toolbar. This version now looks more like Lightroom, the mobile-focused version.


Edit
Auto
B&W
Profile
Adobe Standard
Basic
Curve
Detail
Color Mixer
Color Grading
Optics
Geometry
Effects
Calibration

Edit

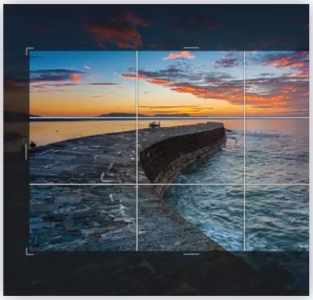
First in the Toolbar is the Edit button. Clicking on this displays the main tools that you will be using to edit and adjust your photos. Edit is broken down into nine sections that cover all your typical adjustment tools such as altering Brightness and Contrast, Hue and Saturation, Detail and Noise Reduction. There are also tools to correct optical flaws in camera lenses and alter image geometry amongst other options.


Crop
Rotate & Flip

Aspect Ratio: Custom

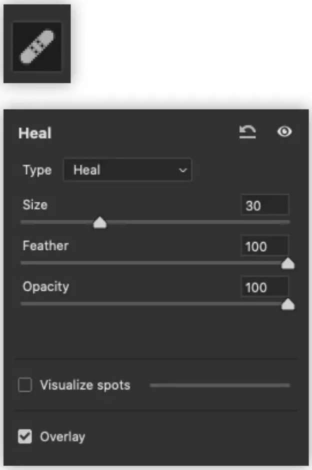
Angle: 0.00

☑ Constrain to Image



Crop & Rotate

As the name of this next tool suggests, this is where you can alter the aspect ratio of your image and perform a crop on it to either remove an unwanted part of the image, or get it to more closely adhere to a compositional guide such as the Rule of Thirds. It also offers a levelling tool that can be dragged over a slanted horizon to instantly correct it and options to rotate the image and flip it vertically and horizontally.



Type: Heal

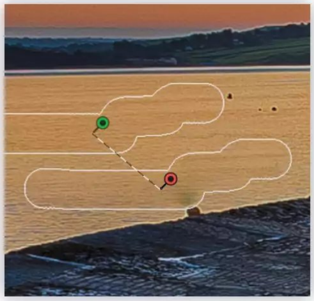
Size: 30

Feather: 100

Opacity: 100

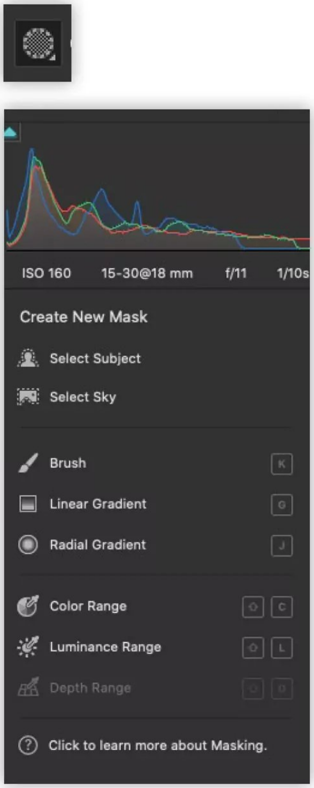
☐ Visualize spots

☑ Overlay



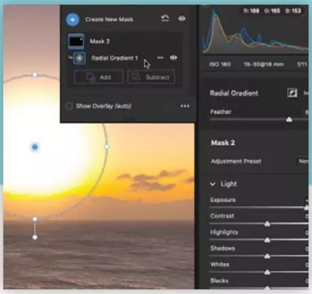
Spot Removal

This is a useful tool that can remove spots and blemishes from your image by either cloning another area over the offending spot, or healing the area in question by blending other pixels into that area. You can choose the Size, Feather and Opacity of the brush which can still be moved once placed if required. If you have multiple images selected, the choices you make will be applied to all selected images at once.


ISO 160
15-30@18 mm
f/11
1/10s
Create New Mask
Select Subject
Select Sky
Brush
K
Linear Gradient
G
Radial Gradient
J
Color Range
C
Luminance Range
L
Depth Range
Click to learn more about Masking.

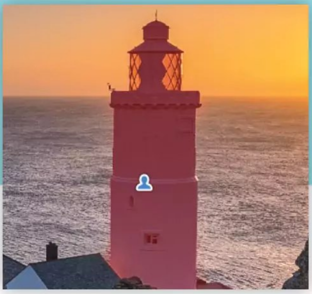
Masking

The most recent update to Adobe Camera Raw (version 14.0.1) sees a number of tools being amalgamated into a unified section all its own. The Adjustment Brush, Linear Gradient and Radial Gradient that appeared separately, now all sit under the Masking button. You also have the new Select Subject and Select Sky options as well as tools to create masks for Color Range, Luminance Range and Depth Range.


Create New Mask
Mask 2
Radial Gradient 1
Add
Subtract
Show Overlay (auto)
Radial Gradient
Feather
Mask 2
Adjustment Preset
Light
Exposure
Contrast
Highlights
Shadows
Whites
Blacks

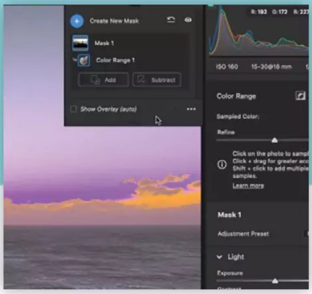
Brush & Gradients

The Brush, Graduated and Radial adjustment tools work just as they did before they were all amalgamated into one. Each tool has a set of adjustment parameters that appear in the tabbed palette on the right of the screen. You can manually brush adjustments onto your image or use the two gradient options to affect areas of your image and apply brightness, exposure, contrast, saturation, sharpness and much more.



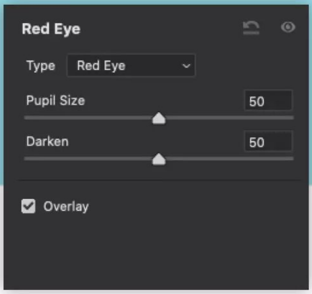
Select Subject/Sky

The two tools are something that up until now, only existed as a selection option in Photoshop. Now though, Select Subject and Select Sky have made their way to Camera Raw. When you activate each one, it scans the image for the most obvious subjects in the image or the main sky area and creates a mask for you. You can then apply various adjustments to those areas just as you would as if you had masked the area manually.


Create New Mask
Mask 1
Color Range 1
Add
Subtract
Show Overlay (auto)
Color Range
Sampled Color:
Refine
Mask 1
Adjustment Preset
Light
Exposure

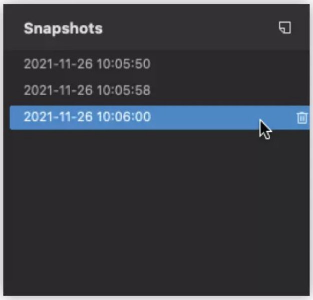
Color/Luminance

The Color Range and Luminance Range tools are variations on the methods you can use to select an area. The Color Range tool, as the name suggests, lets you sample an area of colour you wish to adjust and will only affect that chosen range of colours. Alternatively, the Luminance Range selection method allows you to choose areas of a specific brightness and then apply your adjustments to just those areas.


Red Eye
Type
Red Eye
Pupil Size
50
Darken
50
☑ Overlay

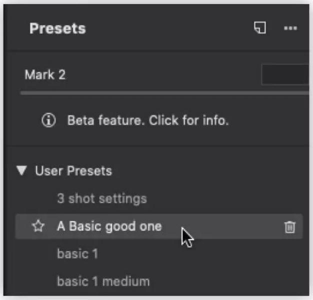
Red Eye Removal

Red eye is caused by the flash from a camera reflecting off blood vessels in the inside of the eye giving the owner of those eyes a rather demonic appearance. Pets can also suffer from this affliction but their eyes glow green. Modern cameras have red eye reduction ability, but sometimes they slip through. This tool can easily remove both red eye and pet eye and restore them to a more normal appearance.


Snapshots
2021-11-26 10:05:50
2021-11-26 10:05:58
2021-11-26 10:06:00

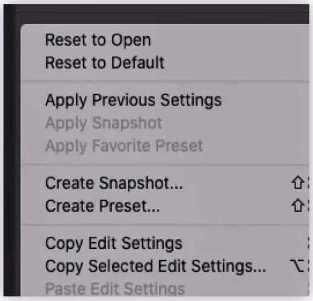
Snapshots

If you are working on a particularly involved edit to one of your photos, it may be prudent to use the Snapshots feature at key points during the edit. Adding a Snapshot saves the image in its current state and allows you to step back through your edits to a point in time when the Snapshot was created. You can still step forward as well since each Snapshot is a non-destructive save point in the adjustment process.


Presets
Mark 2
Beta feature. Click for info.
User Presets
3 shot settings
A Basic good one
basic 1
basic 1 medium

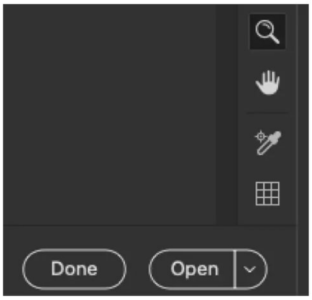
Presets

Pressing the Presets button in the toolbar presents you with an extensive list of image presets. This means that you can apply one-click adjustments to your photos. These presets range from High Contrast colour adjustments to Cross Process effects and a number of Creative and Black and White options too. You can also save any number of user-defined presets too and these are added to the User Presets list.


Reset to Open
Reset to Default
Apply Previous Settings
Apply Snapshot
Apply Favorite Preset
Create Snapshot...
Create Preset...
Copy Edit Settings
Copy Selected Edit Settings...
Paste Edit Settings

More Settings

Represented by three small dots, this button opens a menu of some additional options that allow you to Reset your image to one of a number of previous states. You can also apply either a favourite preset or a Snapshot. If you have a sumner of active settings you like and want to save it as a preset, you can export these to a named file. You can also Load or Save settings and set Raw defaults for newly opened images.



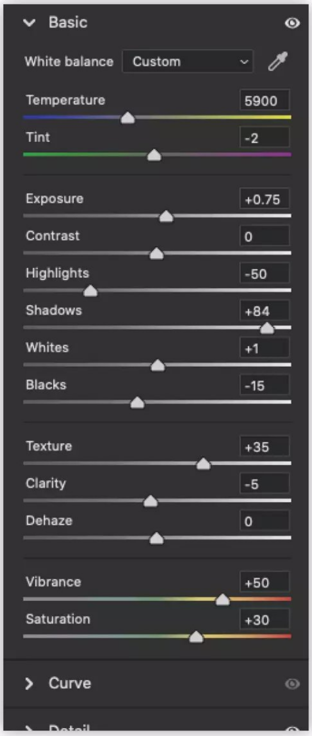
Additional tools

At the bottom of the toolbar on the right, there are also four additional buttons. The magnifying glass is the basic zoom tool (Z), then the Hand Tool (H) lets you click and drag your image around the screen. Press the spacebar to activate the same tool. The Sampler (S) lets you select a number of points and display their current RGB colour values. The Grid Overlay (Shift + G) helps general alignment of horizontal and vertical items.

The Edit Menu

Camera Raw has a powerful set of features all nested within a series of easily accessible control tabs

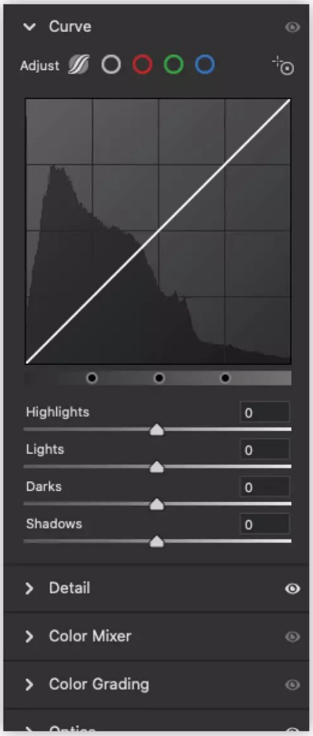
The main interface of Camera Raw is comprised of a series of menus, each with a series of control sliders and some additional menu tabs to access further features. Although you will no doubt spend most of your time working in the Basic panel, when used in conjunction with adjustments from the other control panels, you will be able to enhance your images beyond what you thought possible.



White balance Custom
Temperature 5900
Tint -2
Exposure +0.75
Contrast 0
Highlights -50
Shadows +84
Whites +1
Blacks -15
Texture +35
Clarity -5
Dehaze 0
Vibrance +50
Saturation +30

Basic

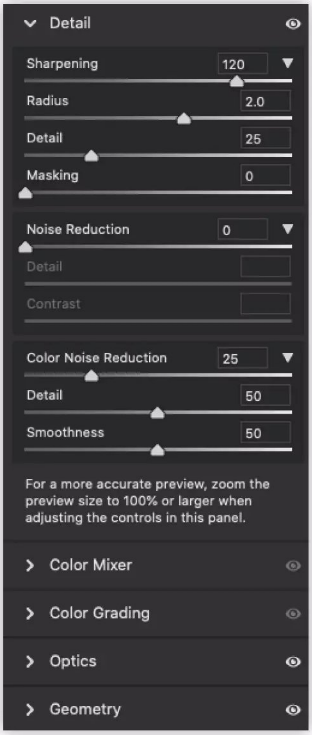
The Basic panel in Camera Raw is probably the one you will spend the most time in and also making the most important global image adjustments. You can adjust White Balance, Exposure, Contrast, Highlights and Shadows as well as Whites and Black. To bring out detail, you can use Texture, Clarity and Dehaze to reduce haze in your photos. You can also adjust Vibrance and Saturation to boost the purity of the colours in your image.



Highlights 0
Lights 0
Darks 0
Shadows 0

Curve

The Curve options in Camera Raw behave very much like the Levels and Curves Adjustments you can make in Photoshop itself. The basic Parametric adjustments allow you to use sliders to individually adjust Highlights, Lights, Darks and Shadows. The Point Curve adjustment allows you to place custom control points. You can work with individual RGB curves too. There is also a Targeted Adjustment Tool for greater tonal editing precision.

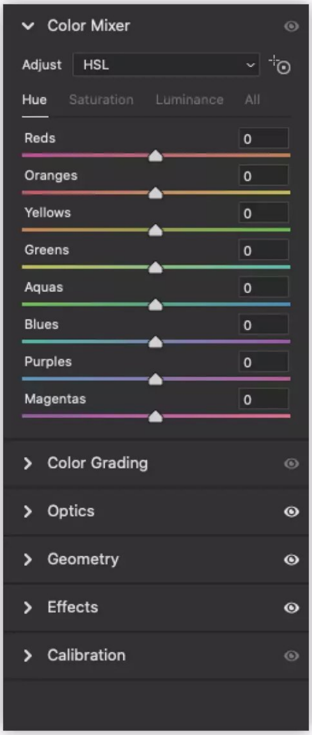


Sharpening 120
Radius 2.0
Detail 25
Masking 0
Noise Reduction 0
Detail
Contrast
Color Noise Reduction 25
Detail 50
Smoothness 50

For a more accurate preview, zoom the preview size to 100% or larger when adjusting the controls in this panel.

Detail

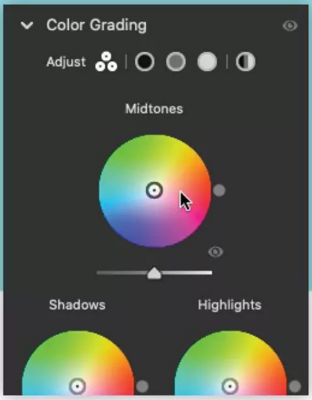
Here you can handle Sharpening and Noise Reduction. Sharpening works by increasing the contrast of the brightest and darkest edges in your image. The Detail and Masking sliders can effectively suppress the halo effects of over sharpening. The Noise Reduction settings help you reduce the amount of image noise and colour artefacts seen in high ISO photos with options to retain as much detail in your images as possible.



Adjust HSL
Reds 0
Oranges 0
Yellows 0
Greens 0
Aquas 0
Blues 0
Purples 0
Magentas 0

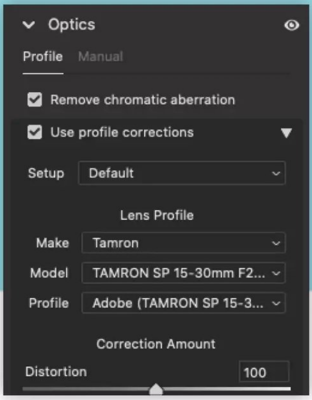
Color Mixer

The Color Mixer panel is where you can get to grips with the colours in your images and how you can affect them. The first panel is Hue, which lets you alter a specific range of colour values such as reds for example; then alter their hue to make them more magenta or make orange more yellow or blue more purple. The other panels allow the adjustment of their Saturation (intensity) and Luminance (brightness).



Color Grading

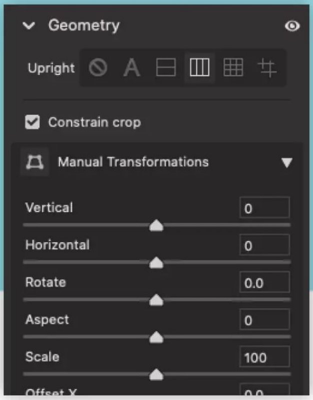
Colour Grading controls how much of a certain colour appears in the highlights or shadows of your images. Interactive colour wheels are used to choose the colour of the overall image and those in the shadows and highlights. Those chosen colours will start to dominate the brightest and darkest areas. Sliders determine whether Highlights or Shadows are more dominant and how intense they are.



☑ Remove chromatic aberration
☑ Use profile corrections
Setup: Default
Make: Tamron
Model: TAMRON SP 15-30mm F2...
Profile: Adobe (TAMRON SP 15-3...
Distortion: 100

Optics

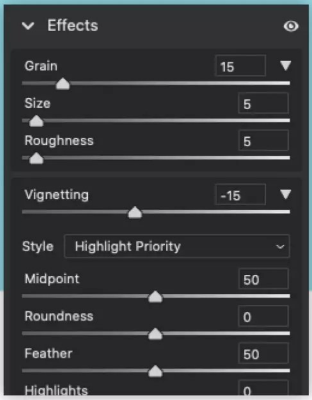
Throughout its life, Camera Raw has been updated at regular intervals. Each new update brings the latest profiles that can automatically assess your photo and determine what lens was used on the camera that took the shot. Once it knows what lens was used, it can apply a set of corrections that can eliminate lens aberrations and distortions specific to that lens. It does also allow for manual adjustments and Defringe control.



☑ Constrain crop
Vertical: 0
Horizontal: 0
Rotate: 0.0
Aspect: 0
Scale: 100
Offset X: 0.0

Geometry

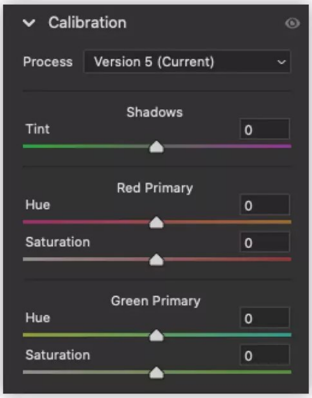
The Geometry feature gives you control over the horizontal and vertical balance and geometry of your photos. From simply levelling a slanted horizon to correcting perspective in both the vertical and horizontal plane, you can apply an automatic adjustment that scans the image for strong upright edges and horizontal ones and corrects them. You also have the option to apply transformations manually as well.



Grain: 15
Size: 5
Roughness: 5
Vignetting: -15
Style: Highlight Priority
Midpoint: 50
Roundness: 0
Feather: 50
Highlights: 0

Effects

The Effects panel allows you to add Grain to your image, with three values to control its impact. You can specify the Grain, the Size of the grains and the Roughness of the image grain you apply. The other effect is Post Crop Vignetting which allows you to darken the outer edges of the photo before and after you've cropped the photo. You can control the Amount, Midpoint, Roundness, Feather and Highlights.



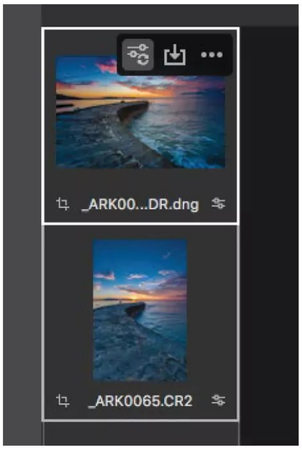
Process: Version 5 (Current)
Tint: 0
Hue: 0
Saturation: 0
Hue: 0
Saturation: 0

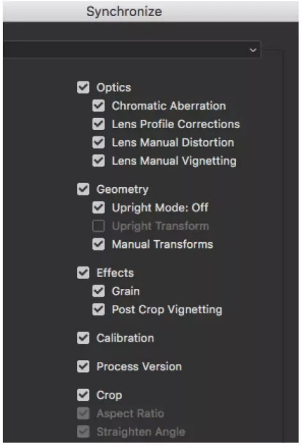
Calibration

Calibration is a module more powerful than it may look at first glance. Mainly used as a calibration for your camera it can be a brilliantly creative tool. You could think of the Calibration panel as a more refined Hue and Saturation adjustment tool. You can alter the Tint value found in the shadows of your image, as well as adjust the general use of Hue and Saturation in the Red Green and Blue channels of your image for much finer control.

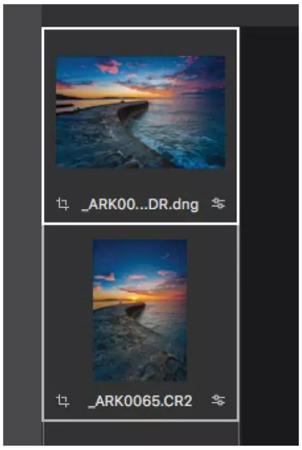
USEFUL TIP

The filmstrip is the area dedicated to displaying thumbnail images of the currently selected images you are working on in Camera Raw. One useful feature you can employ to save time when editing similar images is to copy your edits and adjustments from one image to other images in your filmstrip. Take one image and edit it to suit your preference. The colour, brightness and contrast and various other adjustments have been made to get the most out of that specific image. You can then click the thumbnail of the active image, hold the Cmd key and select another, or multiple, similar images from the filmstrip which will also be highlighted. You can then hover your cursor over the top right of the originally edited image and click the Synchronize icon that appears. Choose which adjustments you want to copy to the other images or simply click Check All and press OK. When you do, all the edits from the first image will be applied to any additionally selected images in the filmstrip.





- ☑ Optics
  - ☑ Chromatic Aberration
  - ☑ Lens Profile Corrections
  - ☑ Lens Manual Distortion
  - ☑ Lens Manual Vignetting
- ☑ Geometry
  - ☑ Upright Mode: Off
  - ☐ Upright Transform
  - ☑ Manual Transforms
- ☑ Effects
  - ☑ Grain
  - ☑ Post Crop Vignetting
- ☑ Calibration
- ☑ Process Version
- ☑ Crop
  - ☑ Aspect Ratio
  - ☑ Straighten Angle

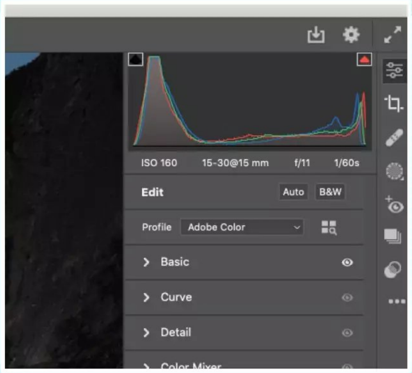


Raw Workflow

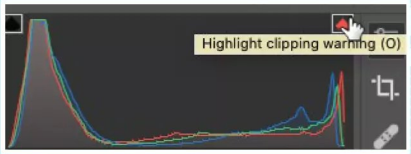
Make your images look their absolute best

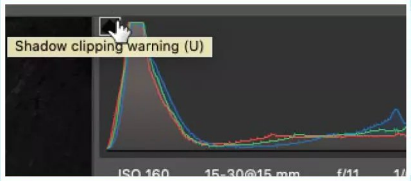
Ask any five professional photographers about the process they use to create their pictures, you'll get five different answers. The amount of processing and adjustment used will vary, depending on the job at hand and the type of final image required, as well as the type of camera used to take the photo and the use to which the photo will be put. There are certain operations that will be common to most photos that you'll want to process, so we'll take a look at a common general purpose workflow that will be suitable for most types of photo. Our example will be using a sunrise photograph taken on a rocky formation down on the coast.

01 If you look at the histogram at the top right of the screen you'll notice that the line at the right (brightest) end of the graph is peaking at both ends and flat in the middle. Ideally the graph should fill the area between the lightest and darkest ends of the range, so we need to slightly reduce the lighter end of the graph without causing under-exposure.

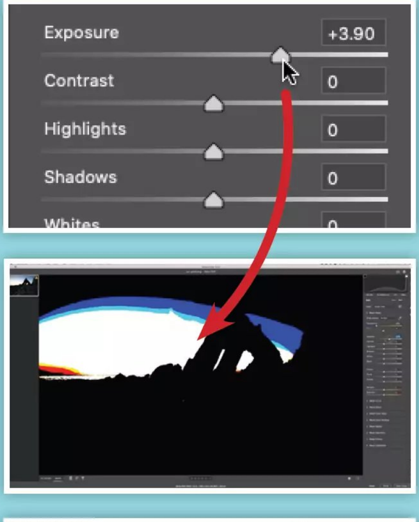


02 To ensure that we don't lose too much detail to highlight clipping, click on the arrow in the top right corner of the histogram window. This turns on the highlight clipping warning. Any over-exposed areas will turn bright red in the image window. Clicking on the left button turns on the shadow clipping warning.

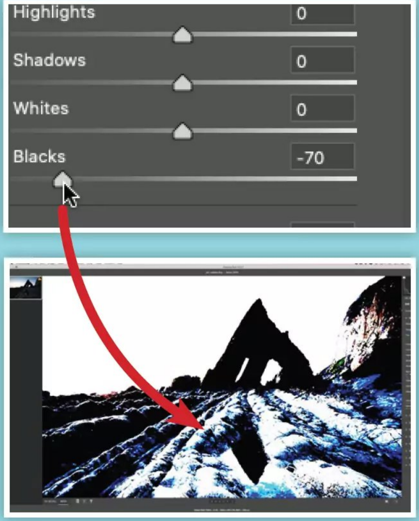




03 In the Basic panel, hold down the Alt key (Option on Mac) and begin to move the exposure slider to the right. With the key held down, all you'll see will be the over-exposed areas. You can do this with any of the first six sliders and it's a good way to make adjustments without going too far.

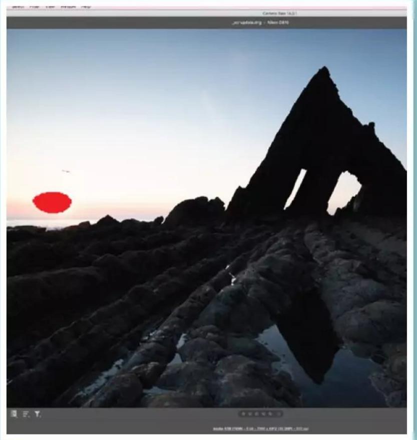


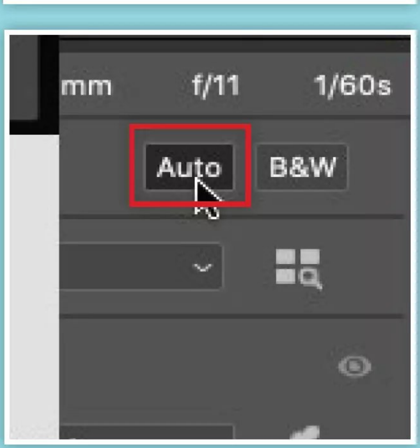
Exposure +3.90
Contrast 0
Highlights 0
Shadows 0
Whites 0



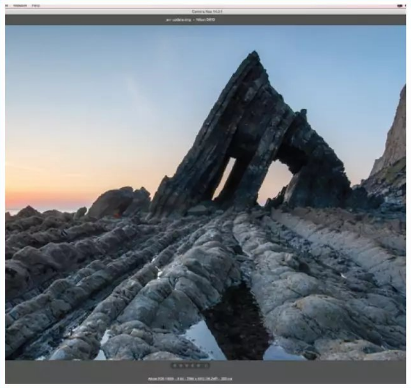
Highlights 0
Shadows 0
Whites 0
Blacks -70

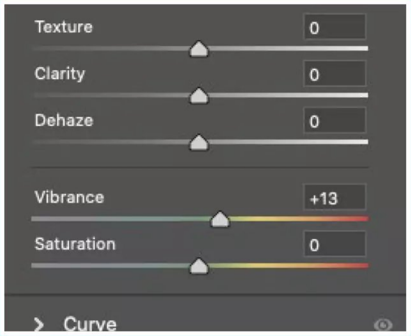
04 We can spend a while carefully adjusting the various sliders by hand to try and equalise the histogram, but the quickest way to get close to the optimum result is to let Camera Raw do the hard work. If you click on Auto the software will automatically adjust the image to produce a good approximation to a balanced exposure. It's probably not going to be ideal, but it will give us a good starting point. You'll notice that the sky along the horizon is over-exposed or very near to it, but that's OK. We're looking for a good spread of tones and that includes white.





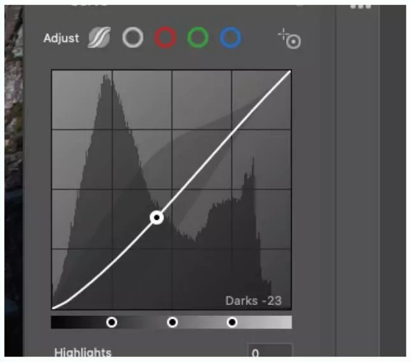
05 The Auto adjustment has made a good job of this particular picture, but for landscape shots a little bit of extra saturation usually looks good, so we'll boost the vibrance and the saturation to get the colours of the sunlight, water and rocks to really pop out.





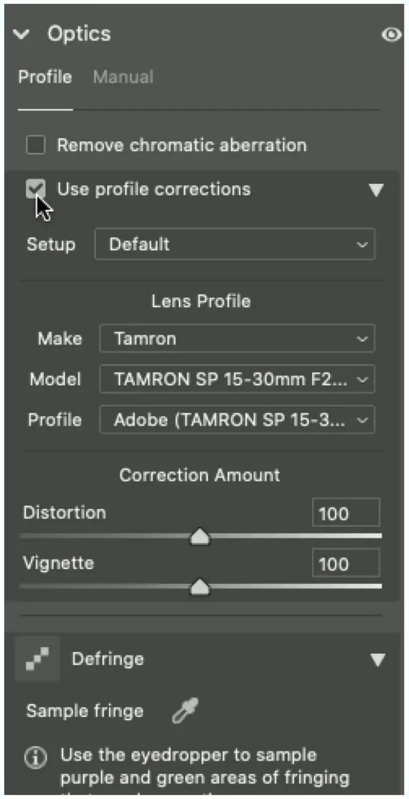
Texture 0
Clarity 0
Dehaze 0
Vibrance +13
Saturation 0

06 Camera Raw also provides another method of adjusting exposure: by altering the tone curve. Although it's no more accurate than using the sliders many people will prefer it because it's nice and simple and gives a good visual representation of what we're doing. It's also a lot harder to burn out the highlights using curves. By adjusting the highlights to decrease a portion of the overexposed areas and by boosting shadows, it is possible to quickly equalise the histogram without losing too much quality.



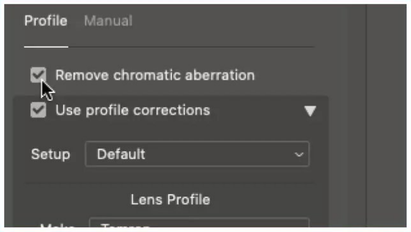
Darks -23
Highlights 0

07 Camera Raw offers a useful lens correction feature under its Optics panel. The Tamron wide-angle lens used to take this picture is a nice bit of glass, but it's not perfect. Although it's hard to see at a glance, this wide-angle shot does suffer from some pincushion distortion and slight chromatic aberration. Fortunately Camera Raw comes pre-loaded with correction profiles for a huge list of popular lenses, including this one. All you need to do to automatically correct the optical distortion caused by the lens is to check the box Use Profile Corrections. You'll see the change happen to your image immediately.

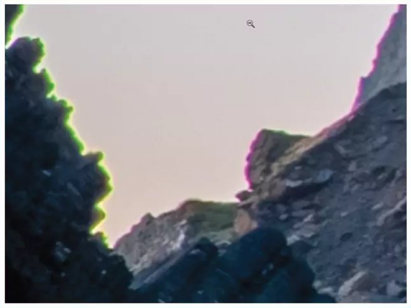


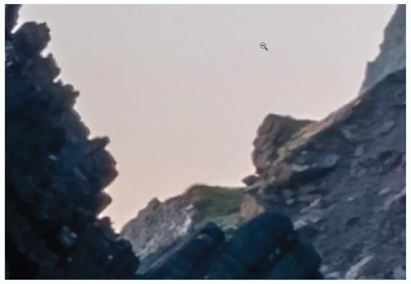
Optics
Profile Manual
☐ Remove chromatic aberration
☑ Use profile corrections
Setup: Default
Lens Profile
Make: Tamron
Model: TAMRON SP 15-30mm F2...
Profile: Adobe (TAMRON SP 15-3...
Correction Amount
Distortion 100
Vignette 100
Defringe
Sample fringe
Use the eyedropper to sample purple and green areas of fringing

08 Chromatic aberration is just as easy to fix. Click on the Remove Chromatic Aberration button to automatically remove it. You'll need to zoom in near the edge of the frame to see the difference, but you'll notice the effects at once.

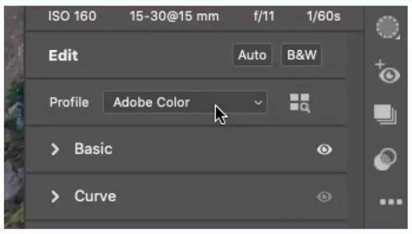


Profile Manual
☑ Remove chromatic aberration
☑ Use profile corrections
Setup: Default
Lens Profile

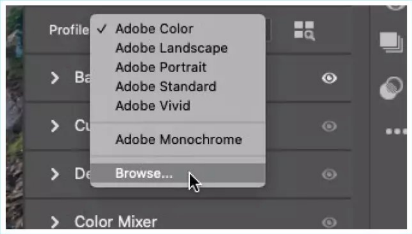




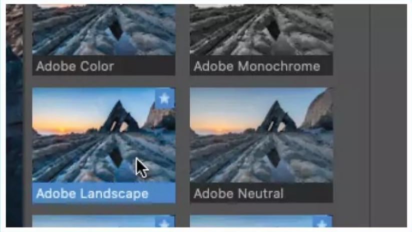
09 The next step is largely a matter of personal taste, but you can also choose to use a preset profile for the colour calibration too. Just below the histogram, click on the Profile panel and from the drop-down menu select your preferred profile. Choose Browse to see more. There are now a number to choose from. This sets the colour rendering profile to the preset.



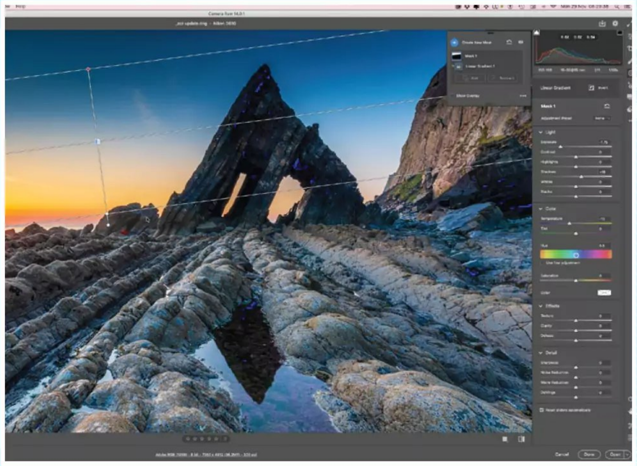
ISO 160 15-30@15 mm f/11 1/60s
Edit
Profile: Adobe Color



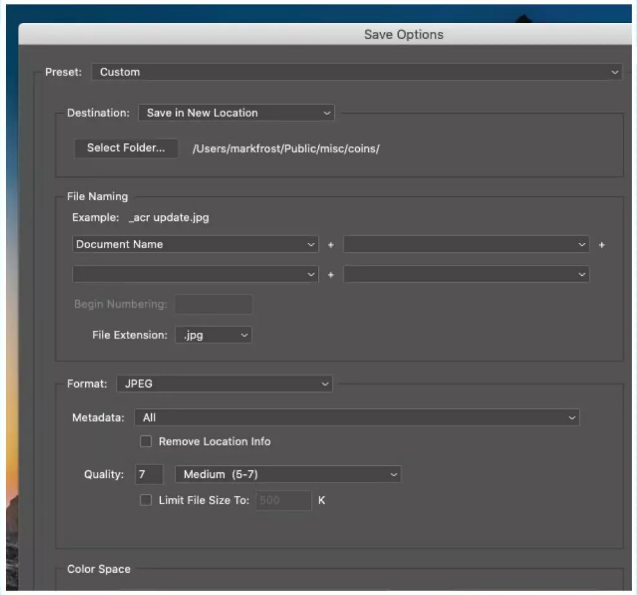
Profile
✓ Adobe Color
Adobe Landscape
Adobe Portrait
Adobe Standard
Adobe Vivid
Adobe Monochrome
Browse...



10 For this particular image, the sky is a bit lighter than we prefer, but we can easily darken it down a bit by adding a high quality digital graduated filter in Camera Raw. Click on the Masking button in the toolbar on the right edge of the screen and you can add a Linear Gradient. Set the exposure slider between -1.5 or -2, then in the image window drag down from the top of the picture to just below the horizon line to apply the filter. If you hold down the shift key while dragging, it will stay parallel with the top of the frame.



11 Next we have the Save Options. Camera Raw gives you the option to output the processed image in a number of different ways, but which one you use will depend on what you want to do with the finished image. For most purposes the default settings will be ideal, but you may need to select a different colour space and for maximum colour fidelity you can output in 16-bit format. You can also choose an image size different from the native resolution of your camera, but be aware that choosing a larger size doesn't magically create new pixels; the image will be enlarged using a resampling algorithm. If you're planning to print the picture you might also want to look at the sharpening options. When you're happy with your choices, click Save. The picture will be saved according to your preferences.



Save Options

Preset: Custom

Destination: Save in New Location

Select Folder... /Users/markfrost/Public/misc/coins/

File Naming

Example: _acr update.jpg

Document Name +

Begin Numbering:

File Extension: .jpg

Format: JPEG

Metadata: All

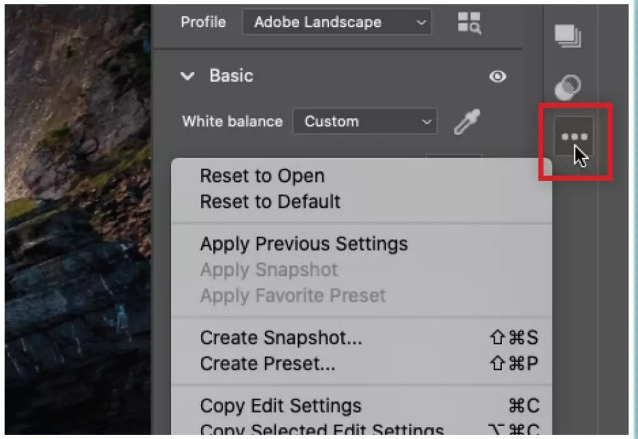
☐ Remove Location Info

Quality: 7 Medium (5-7)

☐ Limit File Size To: 500 K

Color Space

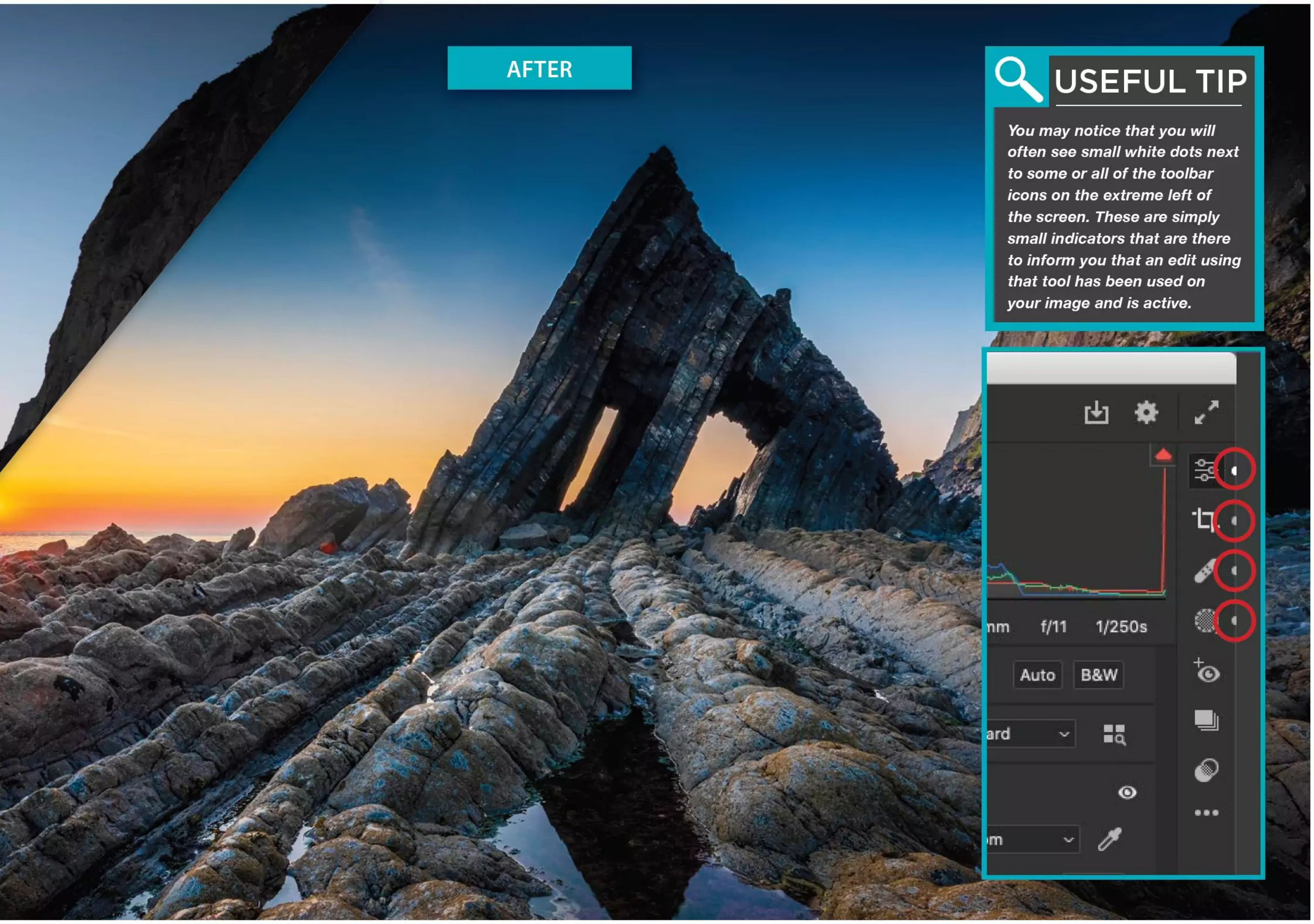
12 You also have the option to save a particular group of adjustment settings in order to use them later on other images. You can apply a selection, or all the settings at once, if you wish. Once you have a group of adjustments you want to save, click on the More Image Settings icon in the toolbar to call up the options menu.



Profile: Adobe Landscape

Basic

White balance: Custom

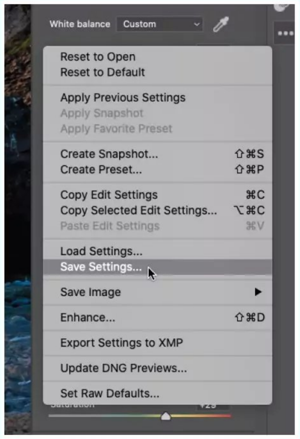

AFTER
nm
f/11
1/250s
Auto
B&W
ard

USEFUL TIP

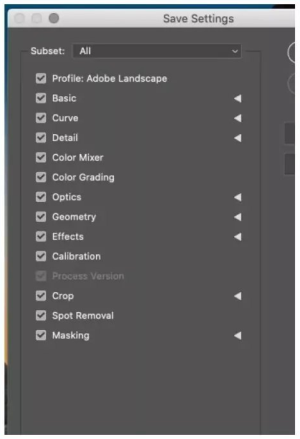
You may notice that you will often see small white dots next to some or all of the toolbar icons on the extreme left of the screen. These are simply small indicators that are there to inform you that an edit using that tool has been used on your image and is active.

13 From the options menu, choose Save Settings. This will open the Save Settings dialog panel where you can specify which settings can be saved. You can choose to Check All or manually choose by checking or un-checking your preferred adjustments listed in the panel. Click Save and name your Preset. Our example is called ‘New Landscape Preset.xmp’.

14 Once saved, the Preset you created is added to the list of User Presets. If you have an image to which you want to apply this Preset, open it in Camera Raw as normal and then scroll down to where ‘New Landscape Preset’ is listed. A real-time display shows the effect it has on your image. If you click it, the adjustments will be applied to the active image.

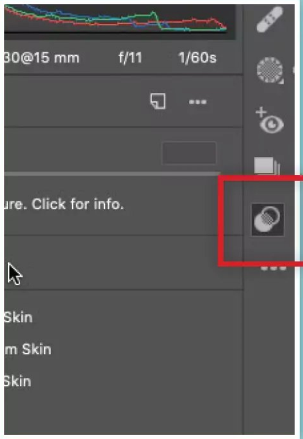

White balance: Custom

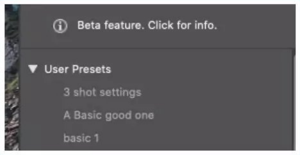
Reset to Open
Reset to Default
Apply Previous Settings
Apply Snapshot
Apply Favorite Preset
Create Snapshot... ⇧⌘S
Create Preset... ⇧⌘P
Copy Edit Settings ⌘C
Copy Selected Edit Settings... ⌥⌘C
Paste Edit Settings ⌘V
Load Settings...
Save Settings...
Save Image
Enhance... ⇧⌘D
Export Settings to XMP
Update DNG Previews...
Set Raw Defaults...

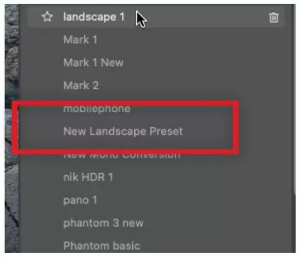

Save Settings

Subset: All

☑ Profile: Adobe Landscape
☑ Basic
☑ Curve
☑ Detail
☑ Color Mixer
☑ Color Grading
☑ Optics
☑ Geometry
☑ Effects
☑ Calibration
☑ Process Version
☑ Crop
☑ Spot Removal
☑ Masking

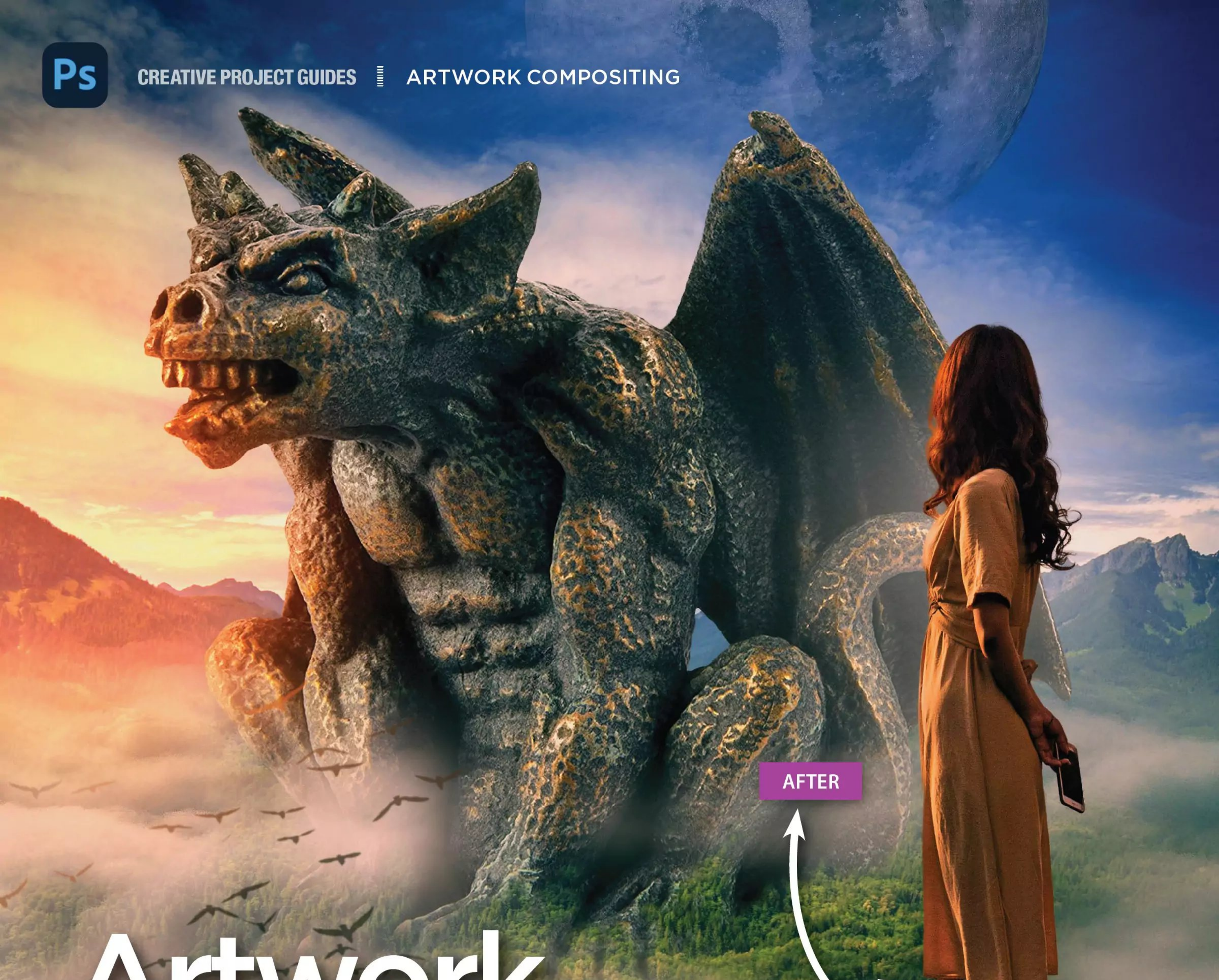

30@15 mm
f/11
1/60s
ure. Click for info.
Skin
m Skin
Skin

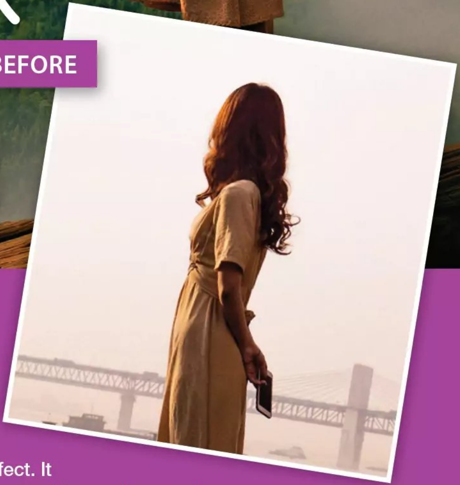

Beta feature. Click for info.
User Presets
3 shot settings
A Basic good one
basic 1


landscape 1
Mark 1
Mark 1 New
Mark 2
mobilephone
New Landscape Preset
New Mono Conversion
nik HDR 1
pano 1
phantom 3 new
Phantom basic

Creative Project Guides

How about taking on some new projects to really let your digital creativity loose? Part of the fun of learning how to use Photoshop is by tackling a variety of photo editing and image manipulation scenarios. It helps you understand how to approach them and what tools are best for the job. It also helps sharpen your growing creative skills.

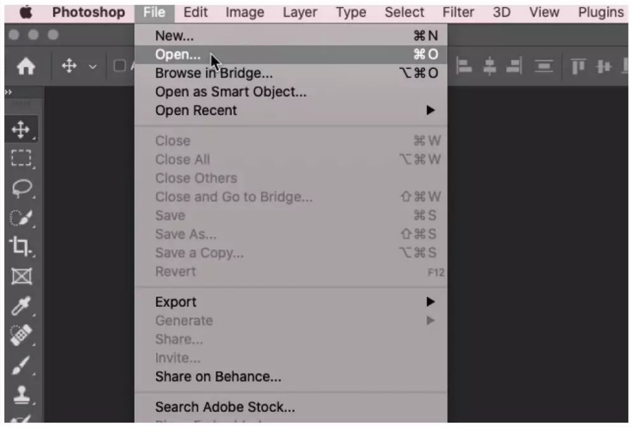




Artwork Compositing

How to incorporate many image elements into a unique piece of artwork

If there is one area that really helps artists to show off their skills, it is in the creation of unique images and fantasy artworks. Websites like DeviantArt and Pixabay are full of images that have been assembled in Photoshop using many disparate components to create a final, cohesive end result. Part of the attraction of those websites is that artists and photographers create content and allow others to download their images and use them for their own artworks. If you find yourself wanting to create your own brand new fantasy image, then Photoshop is perfect. It lets you put each image element on its own layer and with some careful editing and masking, you can blend them to produce a final image worthy of any fantasy genre. So why don't we have a go right now? In our example, we've downloaded a number of free images which we are going to assemble into a final artwork.


Photoshop
File
Edit
Image
Layer
Type
Select
Filter
3D
View
Plugins
New... ⌘N
Open... ⌘O
Browse in Bridge... ⌥⌘O
Open as Smart Object...
Open Recent
Close ⌘W
Close All ⌥⌘W
Close Others
Close and Go to Bridge... ⇧⌘W
Save ⌘S
Save As... ⇧⌘S
Save a Copy... ⌥⌘S
Revert F12
Export
Generate
Share...
Invite...
Share on Behance...
Search Adobe Stock...

01 Let's kick off the process by firing up Photoshop and from the file menu selecting File > Open. Navigate to where your images are stored. Our base image is a jpeg file called 'landscape'. If you double-click your image or click the Open button, the image will open in Photoshop as a new document.

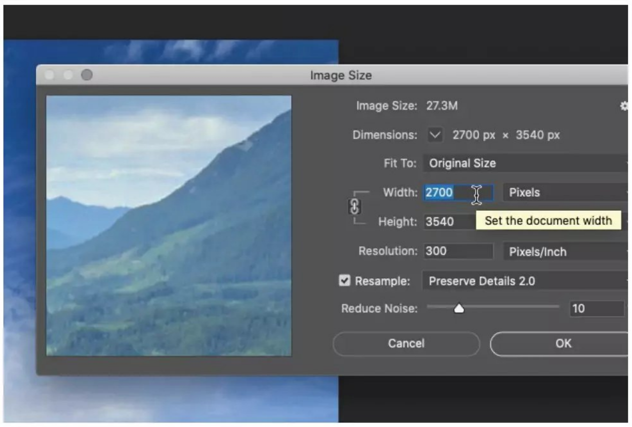
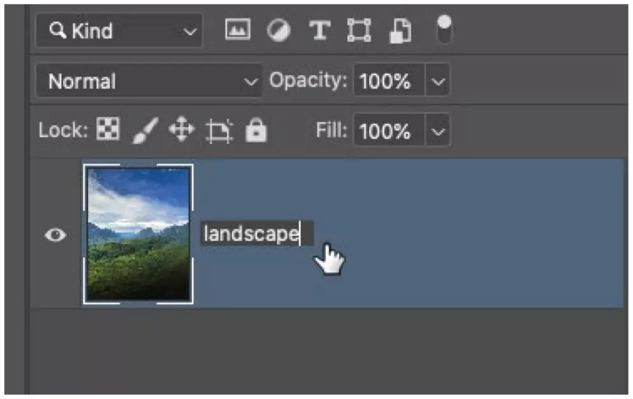


Image Size
Set the document width
Cancel
OK

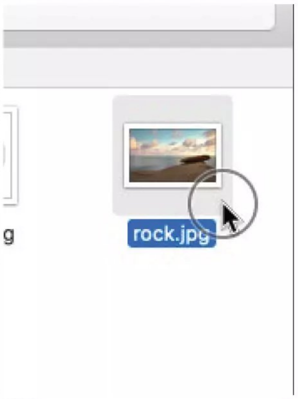
Image Size: 27.3M
Dimensions: 2700 px × 3540 px
Fit To: Original Size
Width: 2700 Pixels
Height: 3540
Resolution: 300 Pixels/Inch
☑ Resample: Preserve Details 2.0
Reduce Noise: 10

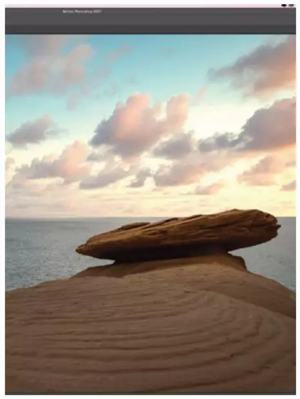
02 Our main background image, sourced from Pixabay, is 2700 pixels wide x 3540 pixels high. Any brushes and other effects used in this document will be sized according the scale if this image. If you're using other images of different sizes, scale your brushes proportionally to your image if needed.



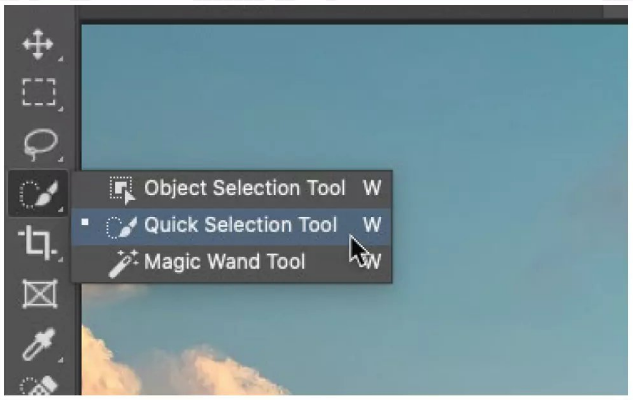
Normal
Opacity: 100%
Fill: 100%
landscape

03 This layer is named 'landscape'. It makes sense to name all your layers as you create them, just so you don't lose track of all the elements. More complex creations in Photoshop can use many layers and adjustments, so be aware of this as you proceed.

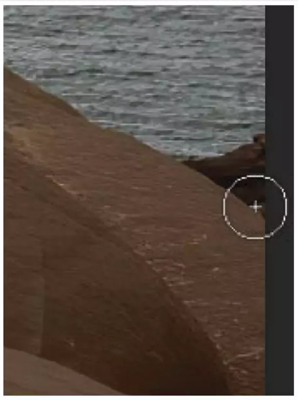


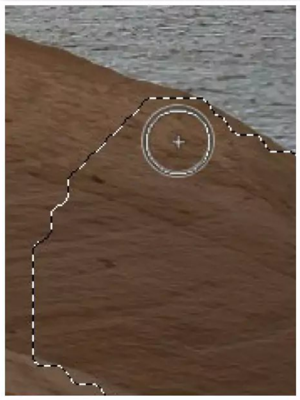


04 Now we need to start bringing in the various image elements needed in this creation. A rocky outcrop is needed as our foreground, so we need to go to File > Open and navigate to our foreground image named 'rock'. This can be double-clicked to open it in its own window in Photoshop.

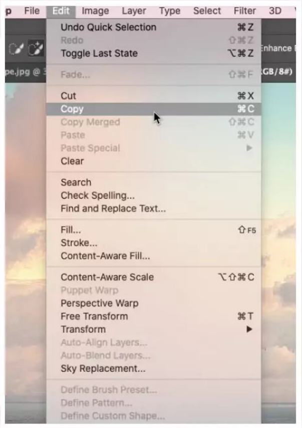

Object Selection Tool W
Quick Selection Tool W
Magic Wand Tool W

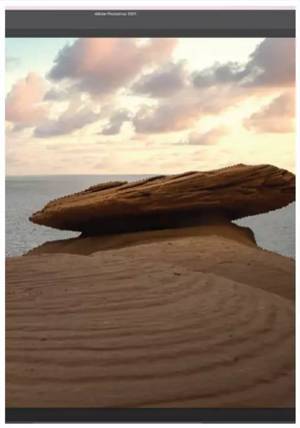
05 The part of the image that interests us is the just the rock foreground. The sea and sky are not needed. This means we need to select just the rocky area. There are a number of ways you can do it, but this it's probably easiest to go to the toolbar and choose the Quick Selection Tool (W).



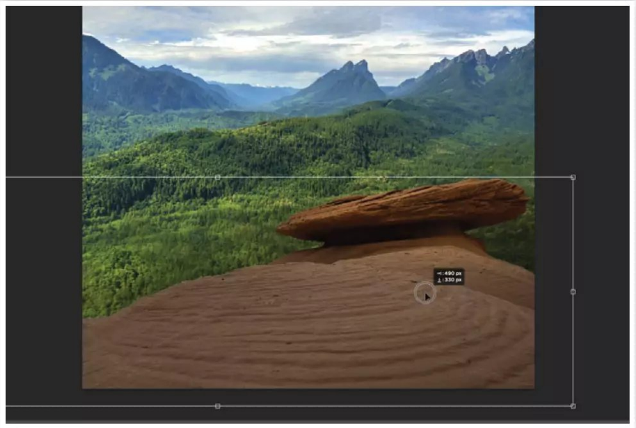


06 With the tool selected and using a relatively small brush size of 50 pixels, you can click on rock foreground and start to drag the selection tool across all of the rocky areas. Because there is sufficient contrast between the rock and the sea and sky, just the rock is selected.

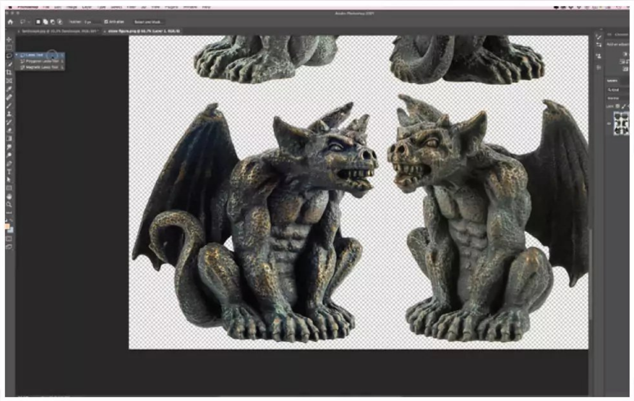

File
Edit
Image
Layer
Type
Select
Filter
3D
Undo Quick Selection ⌘Z
Redo ⇧⌘Z
Toggle Last State ⌥⌘Z
Fade... ⇧⌘F
Cut ⌘X
Copy ⌘C
Copy Merged ⇧⌘C
Paste ⌘V
Paste Special
Clear
Search
Check Spelling...
Find and Replace Text...
Fill... ⇧F5
Stroke...
Content-Aware Fill...
Content-Aware Scale ⌥⇧⌘C
Puppet Warp
Perspective Warp
Free Transform ⌘T
Transform
Auto-Align Layers...
Auto-Blend Layers...
Sky Replacement...
Define Brush Preset...
Define Pattern...
Define Custom Shape...
Enhance



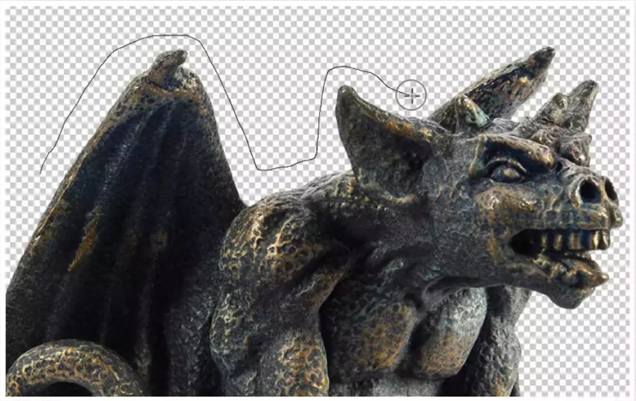
07 When you have all the foreground rock selected, you can copy the pixels within the selection by going to Edit > Copy or pressing Cmd + C. This copies the selected area to the clipboard. Click on the document tab of your original ‘landscape’ image to make it the active window.



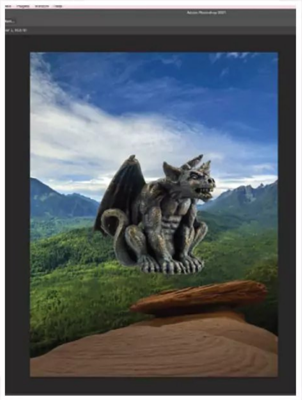
08 Now you can either go to File > Paste or press Cmd + V. This pastes the rock image you selected into your document. Notice that a new layer will be created for it. You can name the layer ‘rock’. We positioned the image at the bottom of the document to create an outcrop overlooking the scene.

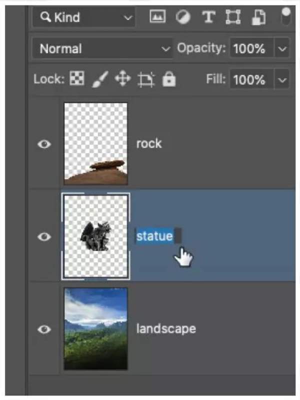


09 Now we can continue to bring other image elements into the document. Go to File > Open and navigate to your next image element. We have a series of stone figures which have already been cut out by its author. We prefer the statue down in the lower left of the file.

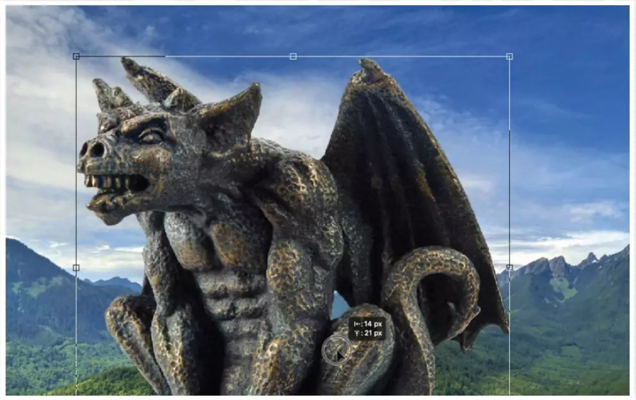


10 Because the statue is already on a transparent background, we can simply pick the Lasso Tool (L) and draw around it so it is completely enclosed by a selection. Then you can either go Edit > Copy again or press Cmd + C. The statue will be copied to the clipboard.

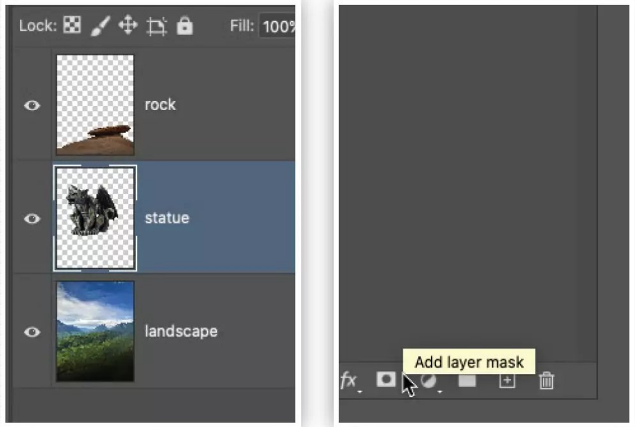



Kind
Normal
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
rock
statue
landscape

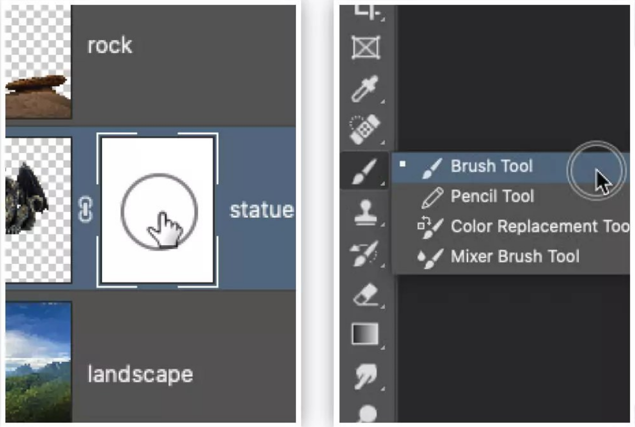
11 Back to the work in progress and press Cmd + V to paste the statue into the document. Make sure this new ‘statue’ layer is between the ‘rock’ and ‘landscape’ layers. We prefer the statue to be facing the other way so we can go to Edit > Transform > Flip Horizontal to have it face the other way.



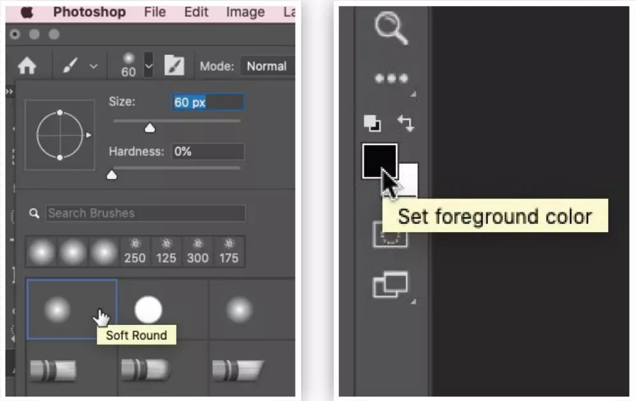
12 Next, the statue needs to be scaled up a bit. With the ‘statue’ layer active, go to Edit > Transform > Scale. Control points will appear around the image which you can drag to enlarge the statue. We scaled it up and placed it slightly to the left of the frame.


Lock:
Fill: 100%
rock
statue
landscape
fx
Add layer mask

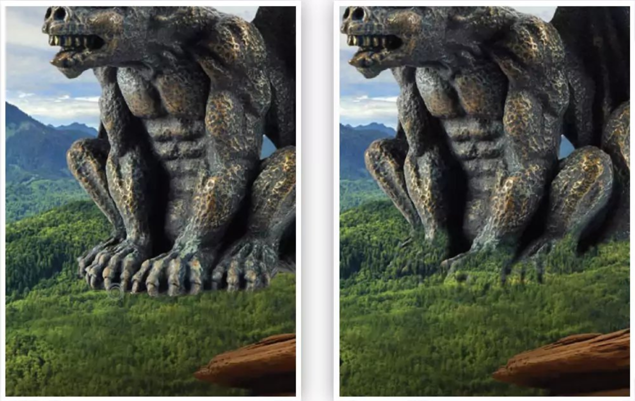
13 We want the statue to appear as if it is some giant artefact dwarfing the surrounding landscape. We also want it to look like it has foliage growing up around it, rather than looking like it's just been dropped there. From the Layer Options panel, choose Add Layer Mask.


rock
statue
landscape
Brush Tool
Pencil Tool
Color Replacement Too
Mixer Brush Tool

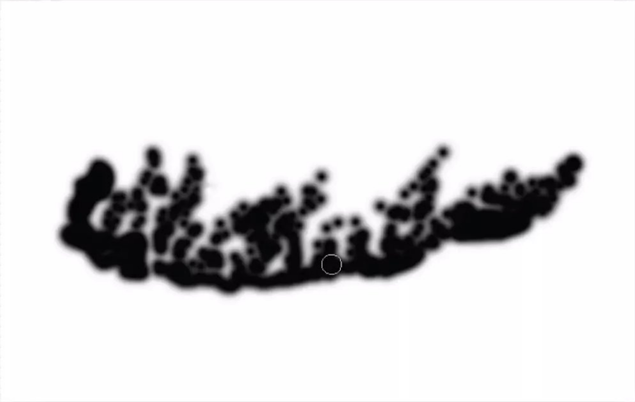
14 A layer mask will be added to the 'statue' image. Click the layer mask thumbnail to make it active. This is important as the next step requires brushing onto the mask and not the image itself. Go to the toolbar and choose the Brush Tool (B) from the menu.


Mode: Normal
Size: 60 px
Hardness: 0%
Photoshop
File
Edit
Image
60
Search Brushes
250
125
300
175
Soft Round
Set foreground color

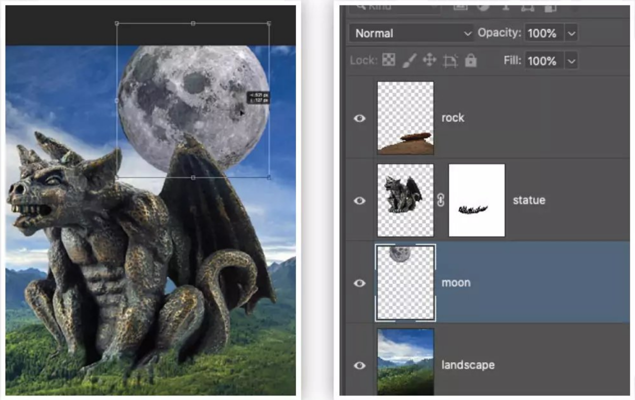
15 With the Brush Tool active, you can go to the Tool Options panel at the top of the document and open the Brush Preset Picker. We need a brush of about 60 pixels with Hardness set to 0% so it will be nice and soft. Then, set the foreground colour to Black using the Set Color tool.



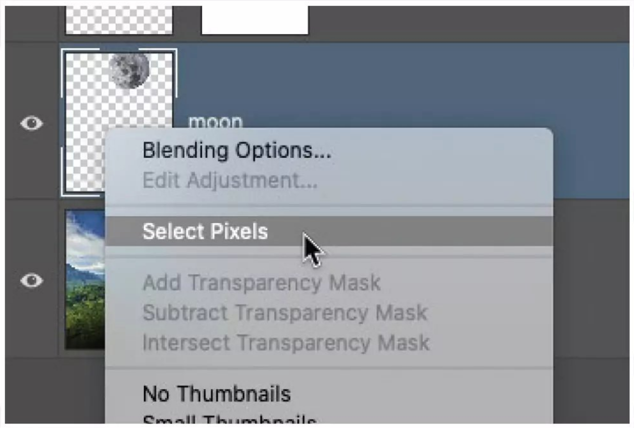
16 Now you can begin to paint with a black brush onto the statue's layer mask. Each brush stroke of black will hide that part of the statue and the foliage underneath will show through. You can paint areas around the toes and make it look like foliage is growing up around its feet.



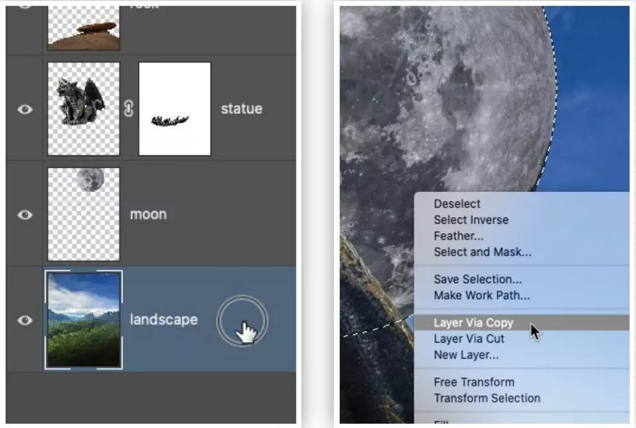
17 If you press Alt + Left-Click the layer mask thumbnail, you can view your handiwork. The brush marks are enough to make the statue look more a part of its surroundings and gives it scale relative to the landscape it is in. You can click on the statue layer thumbnail to exit this view.


Normal
Opacity: 100%
Fill: 100%
Lock:
rock
statue
moon
landscape

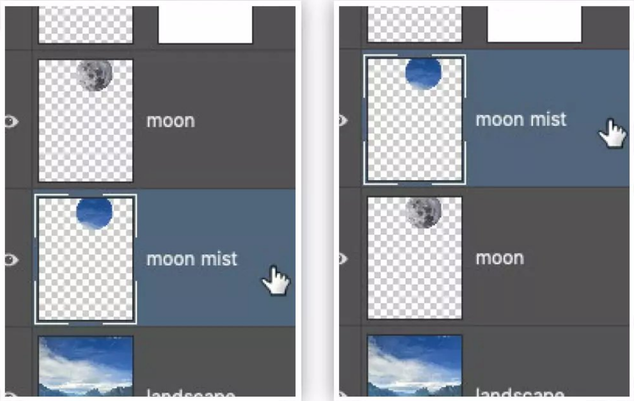
18 Now we can continue layering in new elements. Go File > Open and bring in another image of the moon which we copied to the clipboard. We pasted, scaled and positioned the moon in the working document in layer called 'moon' between the 'landscape' and 'statue' layers.


moon
Blending Options...
Edit Adjustment...
Select Pixels
Add Transparency Mask
Subtract Transparency Mask
Intersect Transparency Mask
No Thumbnails
Small Thumbnails

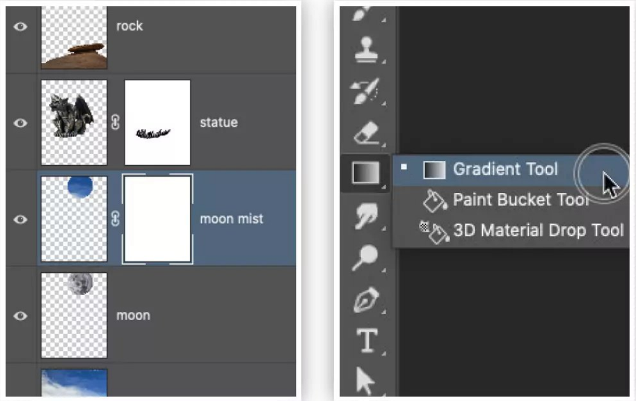
19 The moon looks odd hanging there in front of the clouds, but we can blend it in with some masking. Right-Click the 'moon' layer thumbnail and choose Select Pixels from the list. Alternatively, you can press Alt + Right-Click the 'moon' layer thumbnail. This makes a selection of the moon.


statue
moon
landscape
Deselect
Select Inverse
Feather...
Select and Mask...
Save Selection...
Make Work Path...
Layer Via Copy
Layer Via Cut
New Layer...
Free Transform
Transform Selection

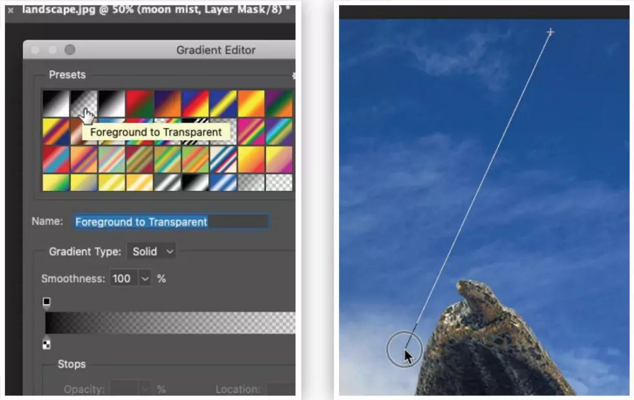
20 With the selection still active, click on the 'landscape' layer. Now choose any selection tool such as the Lasso (L). Right-Click inside the selection area denoted by the 'marching ants' and choose Layer Via Copy from the list. This has just copied the section of sky directly under the moon.


moon
moon mist
landscape
moon mist
moon
landscape

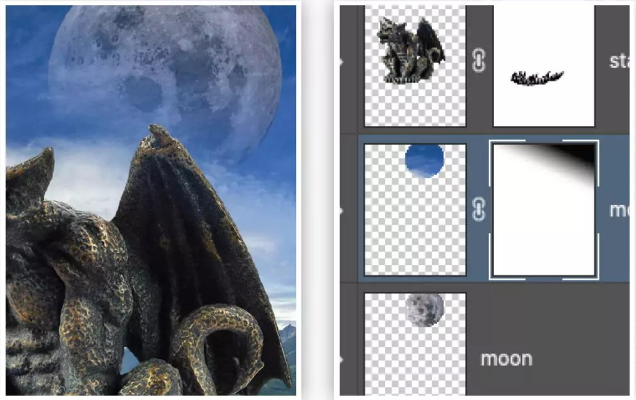
21 This copied area will appear on its own layer which you can call 'moon mist'. You can click and drag this layer so it appears above the 'moon' layer. The moon image will effectively disappear, but it is still there. Click on the 'moon mist' layer to make sure it is active.


rock
statue
moon mist
moon
Gradient Tool
Paint Bucket Tool
3D Material Drop Tool

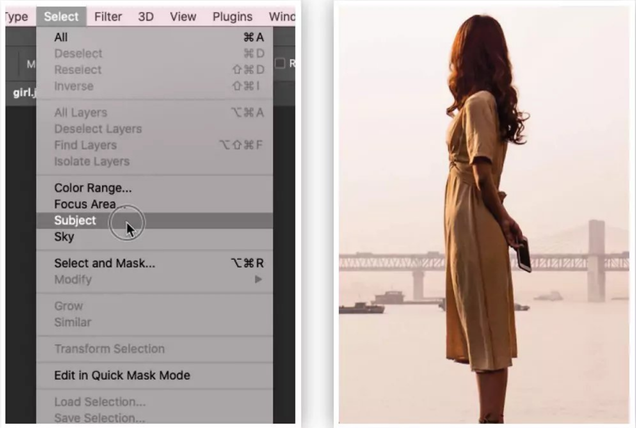
22 Press Cmd + D to ensure no selections are active. In the Layer Options panel, click on the Add layer Mask button. A layer mask will appear on the 'moon mist' layer. Click the layer mask thumbnail to make it active, then go to the toolbar and choose the Gradient Tool (G).


landscape.jpg @ 50% (moon mist, Layer Mask/8) *
Gradient Editor
Presets
Foreground to Transparent
Name: Foreground to Transparent
Gradient Type: Solid
Smoothness: 100 %
Stops
Opacity: %
Location:

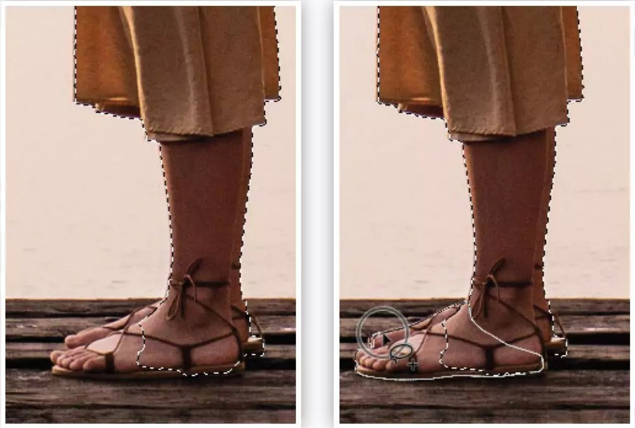
23 Use the Gradient Tool Options Panel to make sure you have the Foreground to Transparent type selected in the Gradient Editor. Now you can click and drag the Gradient Tool from the top of the moon down to the lower part of the moon. When you let go, a black gradient will be created on the mask.



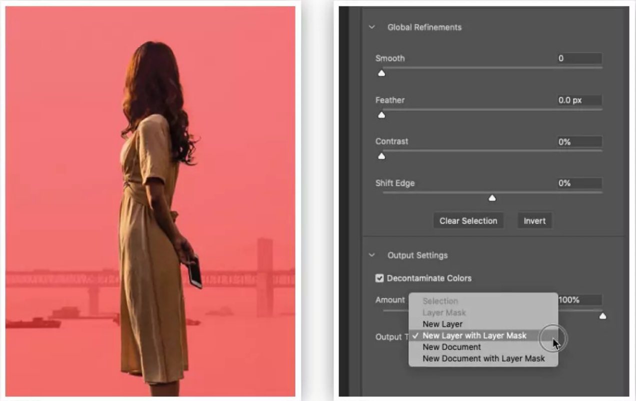
24 Where the gradient is solid black, the 'moon mist' layer is concealed. As the gradient fades to transparent, more of the layer is revealed. This creates the illusion that the moon is just visible through the atmosphere. You can also make the 'moon' layer Opacity 85% to help it blend in.


Type
Select
Filter
3D
View
Plugins
Wind
All ⌘A
Deselect ⌘D
Reselect ⇧⌘D
Inverse ⇧⌘I
All Layers ⌥⌘A
Deselect Layers
Find Layers ⌥⇧⌘F
Isolate Layers
Color Range...
Focus Area...
Subject
Sky
Select and Mask... ⌥⌘R
Modify
Grow
Similar
Transform Selection
Edit in Quick Mask Mode
Load Selection...
Save Selection...

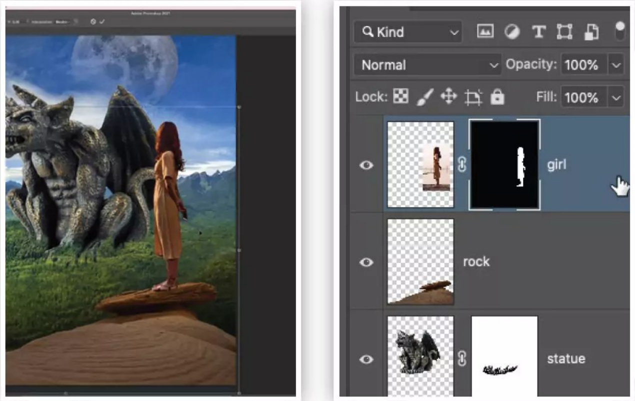
25 We're going to add a foreground character. Go to File > Open and navigate to an image called 'girl' and open it. We need to extract her from the rest of the image. There are a few ways to do this but Photoshop has introduced the Select Subject feature that can automate the selection process for you.



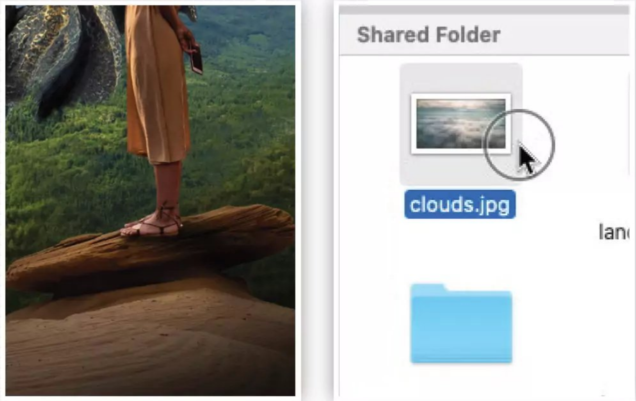
26 The Select Subject tool has done a reasonable job apart from her toes. Select the Lasso Tool (L) and make sure the Add to Selection button is active in the Tool Options panel. Now you can draw around the parts of her feet that haven't been selected ready for the next part.


Global Refinements
Smooth 0
Feather 0.0 px
Contrast 0%
Shift Edge 0%
Clear Selection
Invert
Output Settings
☑ Decontaminate Colors
Amount 100%
Output To
Selection
Layer Mask
New Layer
✓ New Layer with Layer Mask
New Document
New Document with Layer Mask

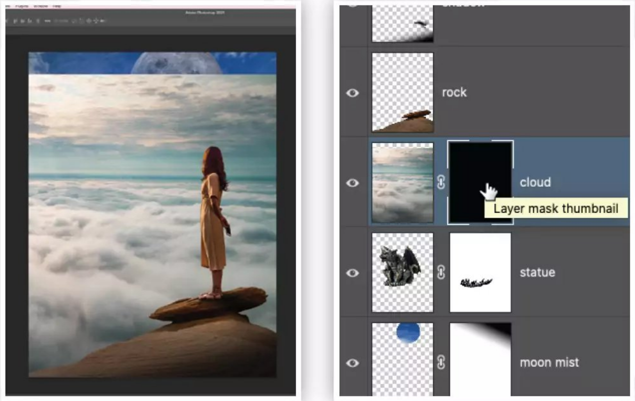
27 Click the Select and Mask button in the Tool Options panel. Use the Refine Edge Brush Tool (R) to refine the quality of the mask around the girl. Increasing the Edge Detection Radius to 8 pixels can help. Click the Decontaminate Colors button, choose New Layer with Layer Mask then click OK.


Kind
Normal
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
girl
rock
statue

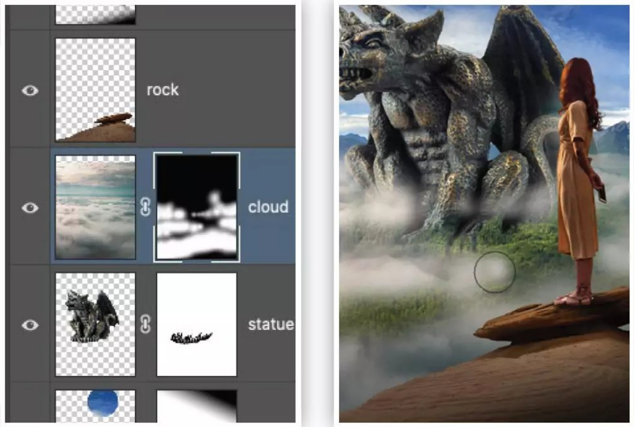
28 Copy and paste the new layer into your working document. Put this new layer at the top of the stack above the 'rock' layer and name it 'girl'. You may want to scale both her and the rocks to a slightly smaller size by pressing Cmd + T and dragging and scaling until you have it how you want it.


Shared Folder
clouds.jpg
lan

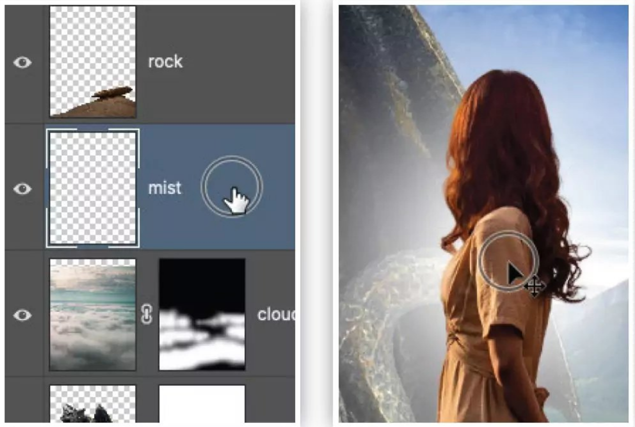
29 We also added a layer between the girl and the rocks called 'shadow'. We simply used a small, soft, black brush to add a dark area under her feet to make it look she was standing on the rocks. Next, we went to File > Open and double-clicked on a file called 'clouds' to open it.


rock
cloud
Layer mask thumbnail
statue
moon mist

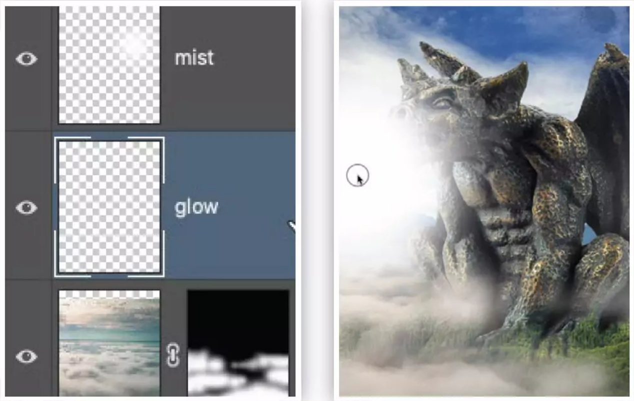
30 We copied and pasted the clouds image onto its own layer between the statue and rock layers. Then we clicked the Add Layer Mask button whilst holding the Alt key to add a black Layer Mask to the cloud image, effectively concealing it for the moment.



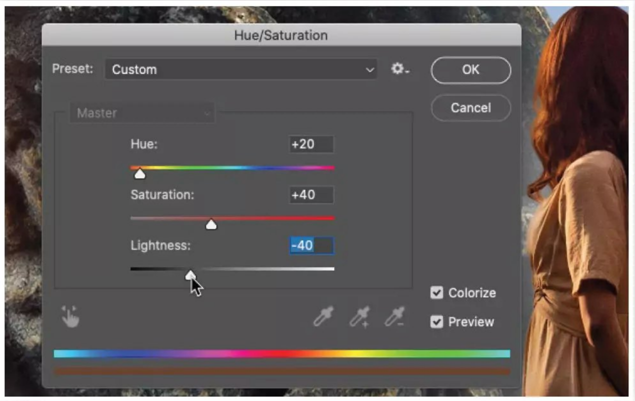
31 We then chose a 500 pixel soft brush and set its colour to white. Then, by paining white brush marks on the black layer mask, we were able to reveal areas of cloud to give the illusion of a fog layer hovering above the foliage and around the base of the statue.



32 We also added a 'mist' layer between the 'cloud' and rock' layers and used a 1200 pixel soft white brush to add extra mist just by the girl's head and shoulders. We dropped the 'mist' layer's Opacity to about 50%. This gave a little separation between the girl and the statue.



33 At this point we want to add a little glow as if the sun is just off to one side of the scene. We added a new layer called 'glow' between the 'cloud' and 'mist' layers. Then we used a 1200 pixel soft white brush to paint a large blob off to the left of the scene below the statue's mouth.



Preset: Custom

Hue: +20

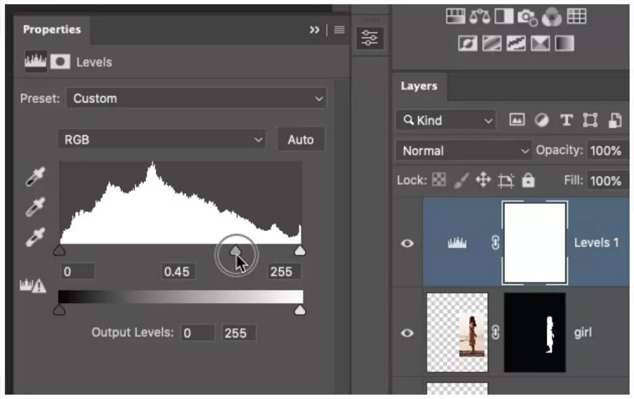
Saturation: +40

Lightness: -40

☑ Colorize

☑ Preview

34 The 'glow' layer's Blend Mode needs to be changed to Linear Light. Then go to Image > Adjustments > Hue/Saturation (Cmd + U) to bring up the Hue/Saturation panel. Make Hue +20, Saturation +40 and Lightness -40 and check the Colorize button. The white blob should now be a warm glow. Click OK.



Preset: Custom

RGB

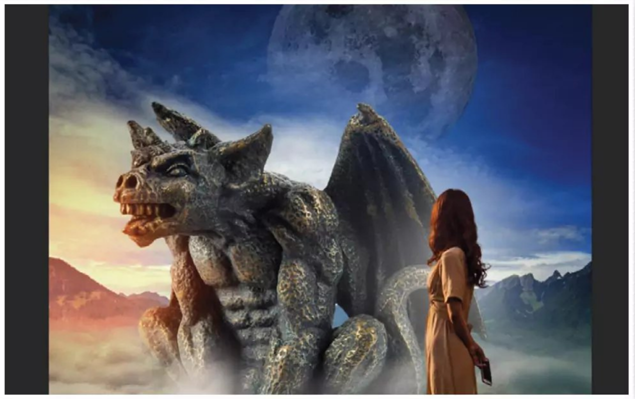
0 0.45 255

Output Levels: 0 255

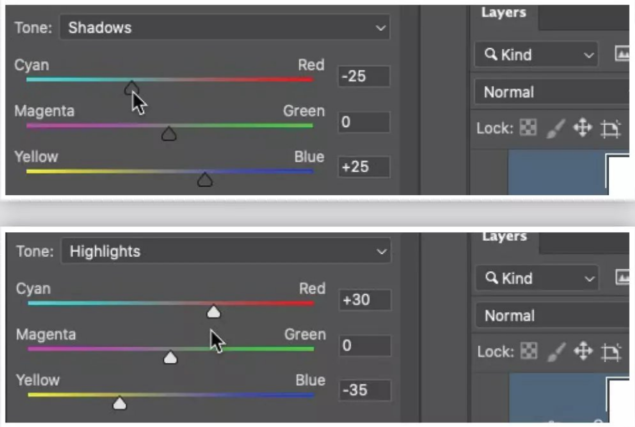
Normal Opacity: 100%

Fill: 100%

35 In the Layer Option panel, click the New Fill or Adjustment Layer button and choose Levels. Make sure 'Levels 1' is at the very top of the layer stack. In the Levels' properties panel, drag the mid-tone slider to the right, then drag the White Point slider to the left to darken the image.



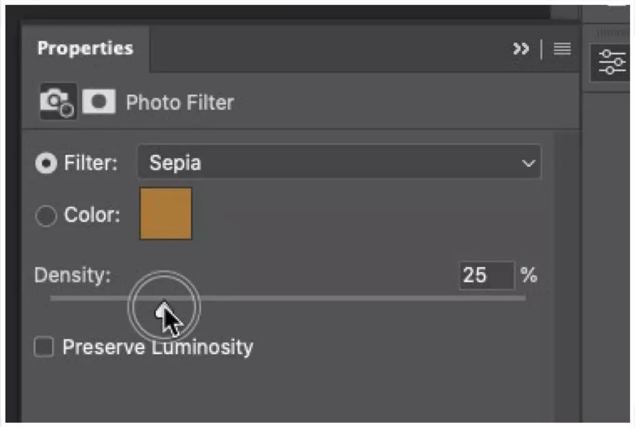
36 Then take a large 1600 pixel soft, black, brush and begin to paint on the 'Levels 1' layer mask to reveal areas you want to be at their original brightness such as the glow, moon, clouds and other areas that you like. This adds a little more mood to the overall look of the scene.



Tone: Shadows
Cyan Red -25
Magenta Green 0
Yellow Blue +25

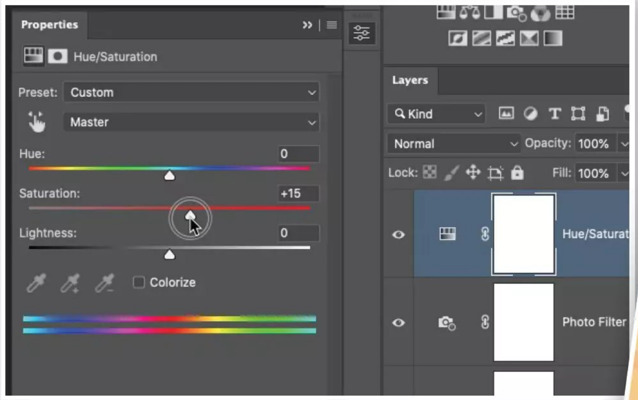
Tone: Highlights
Cyan Red +30
Magenta Green 0
Yellow Blue -35

37 We then added a new Color Balance adjustment layer to the top of the stack. We added Cyan and Blue to the Shadows and Red and Yellow to the Highlights. Preserve Luminosity was unchecked. This added more drama to the scene and also evens out the global colour palette a little.



Properties
Photo Filter
● Filter: Sepia
○ Color:
Density: 25 %
☐ Preserve Luminosity

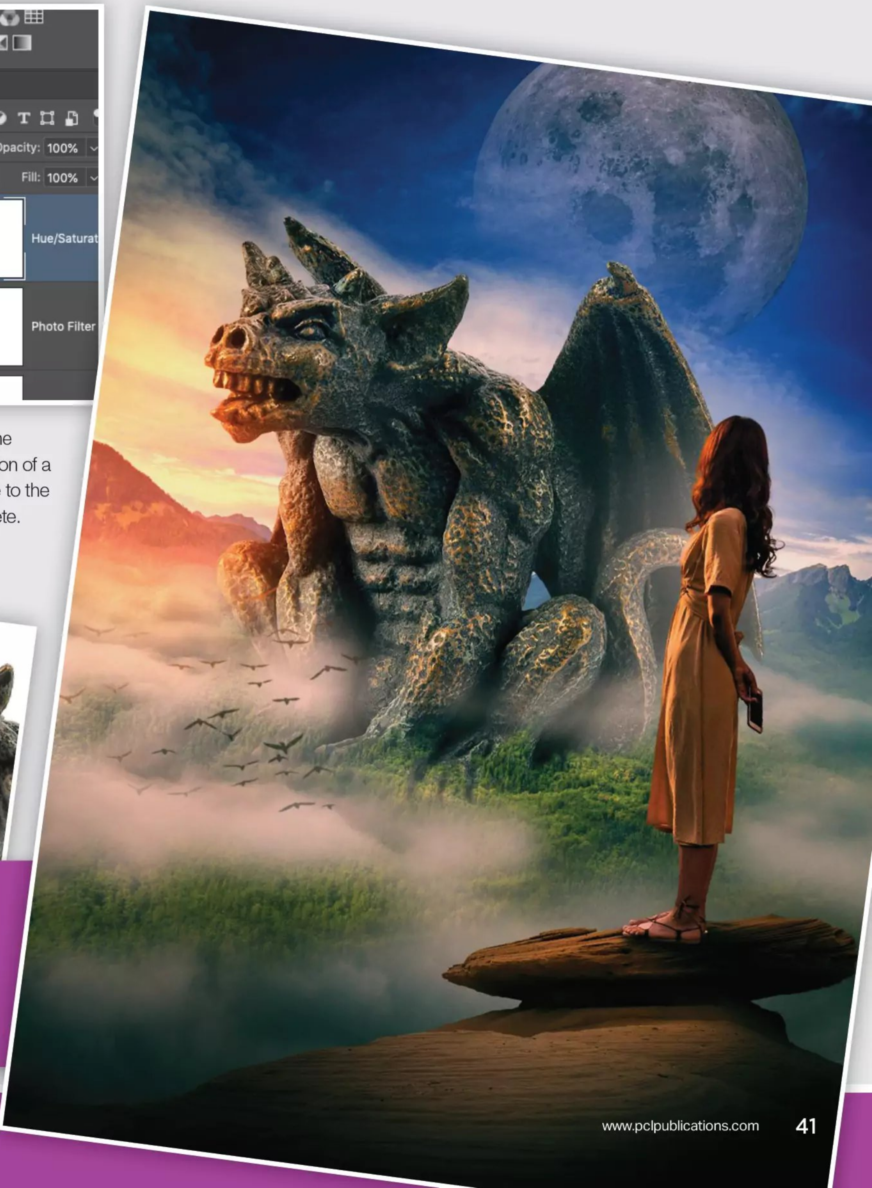
38 Then we added a Photo Filter adjustment and used Sepia as the filter colour, set its Density to 25% and unchecked the Preserve Luminosity button. This adds a global colour cast to the image that ties all the various objects of differing colours together.



Properties
Hue/Saturation
Preset: Custom
Master
Hue: 0
Saturation: +15
Lightness: 0
☐ Colorize

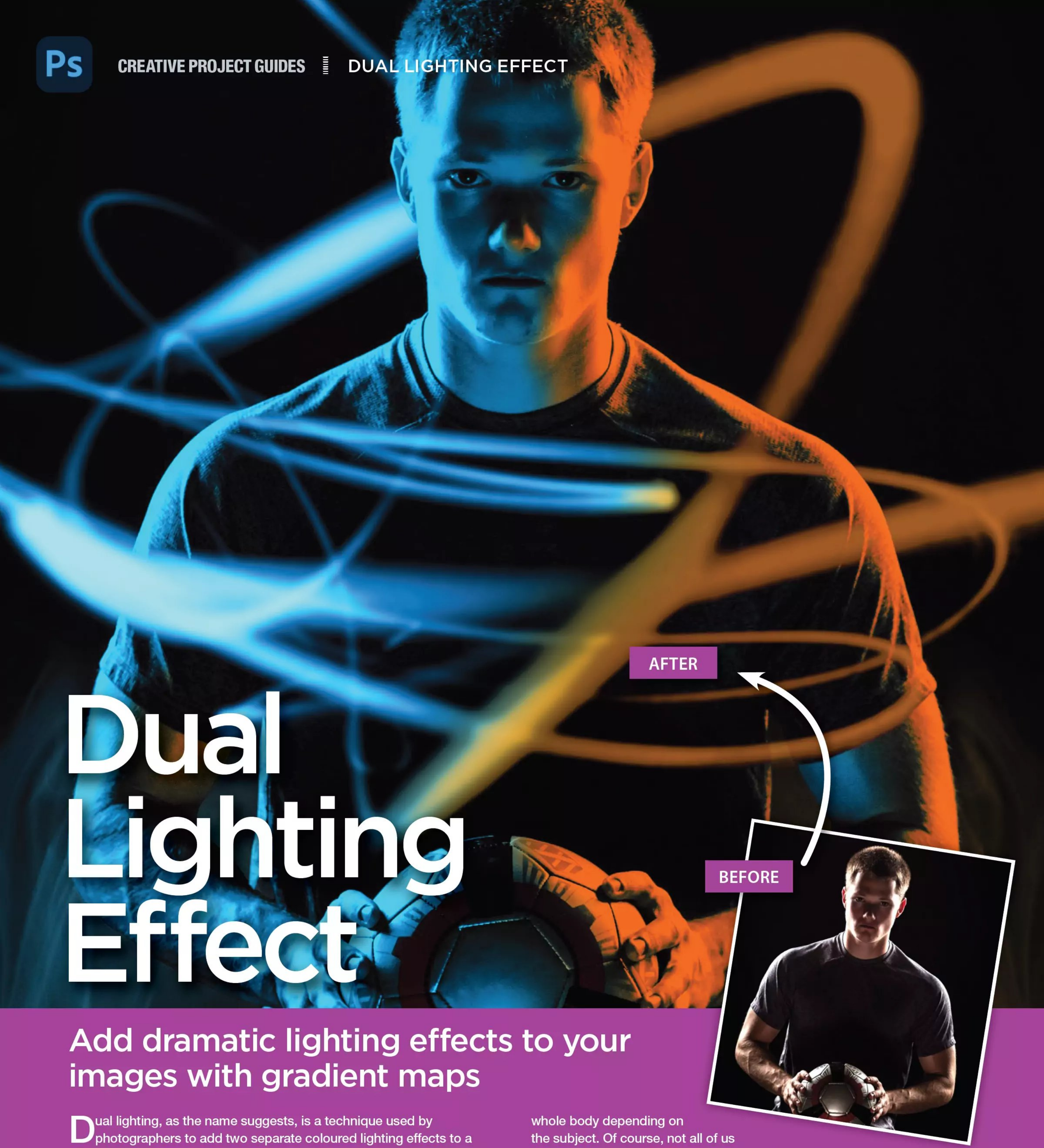
Layers
Kind
Normal Opacity: 100%
Lock: Fill: 100%
Hue/Saturat
Photo Filter

39 A new Hue/Saturation adjustment layer was added to boost the overall saturation of the scene. We then thought that the addition of a small flock of birds in the middle distance would add some more scale to the statue. This final tweak meant that our fantasy scene was now complete.



Bring your vision to life

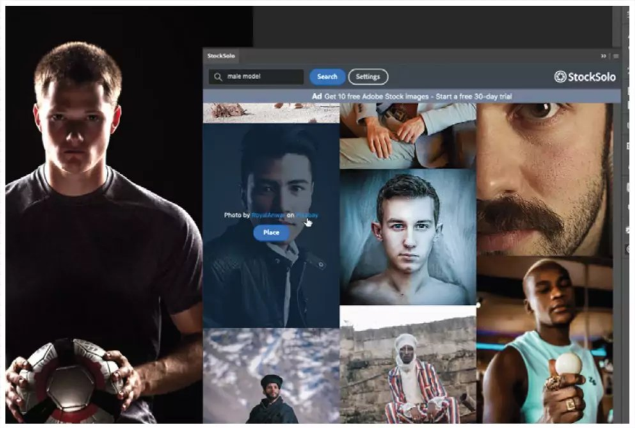
Compositing allows you to amazing artworks.



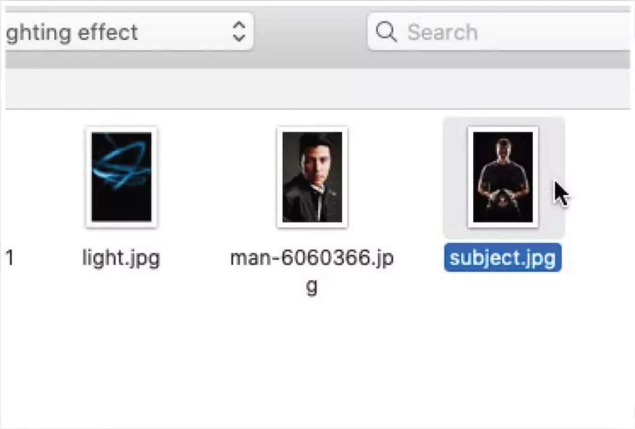
Dual Lighting Effect

Add dramatic lighting effects to your images with gradient maps

Dual lighting, as the name suggests, is a technique used by photographers to add two separate coloured lighting effects to a subject. Most typically, they are used in a studio setup and can add a lot of drama to a portrait session. One colour of light is used to strongly illuminate the subject from one side and then the second light is brought in to add a cross-lit effect with another complimentary colour on the other side. This can be done with just the head and shoulders or the whole body depending on the subject. Of course, not all of us are photographers with access to expensive studio space and photographic equipment, but with a good source image, Photoshop can turn a normal portrait into an image with just as much drama as those captured by the pros. Since this is Photoshop, we can even take it a step further with extra effects to enhance the image even more.


StockSolo
male model
Search
Settings
StockSolo
Ad Get 10 free Adobe Stock Images - Start a free 30-day trial
Place

01 The key to a good dual lighting effect is by selecting a good source image with the potential to be turned into a final dramatic photo. If you don't have your own, you can find plenty of images on Pixabay, Pexels and other free sites which are attribution free.


ghting effect
Search
1
light.jpg
man-6060366.jpg
subject.jpg

02 Our example is of a young footballer holding a soccer ball. As you can see, he has been lit quite dramatically along each side of his body creating what is known as rim lighting. This is a great example that can benefit from the dual lighting effect.

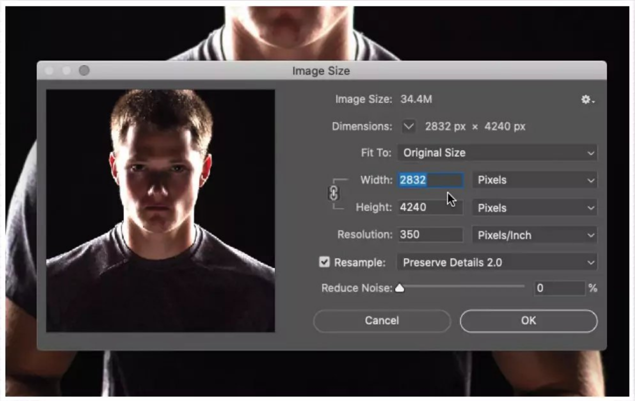
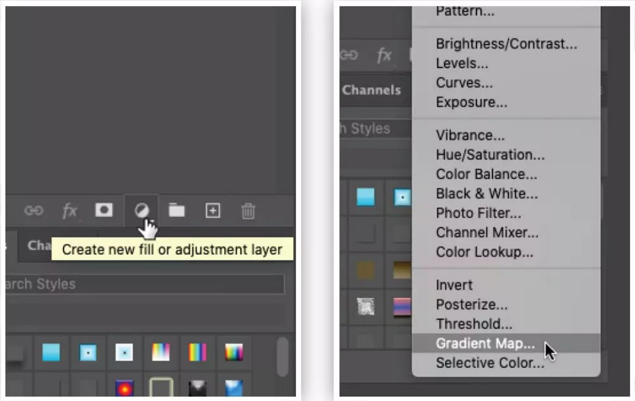


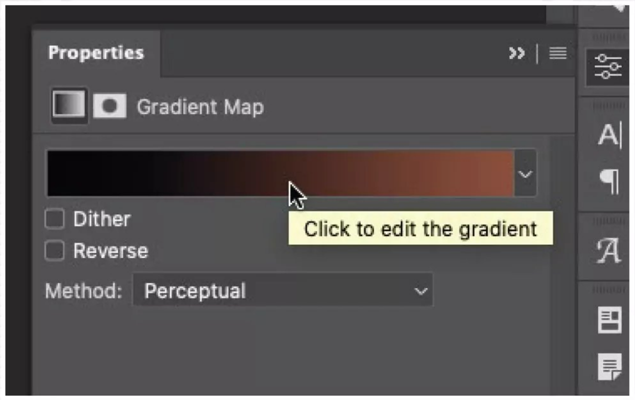
Image Size
Cancel
OK

Image Size: 34.4M
Dimensions: 2832 px × 4240 px
Fit To: Original Size
Width: 2832 Pixels
Height: 4240 Pixels
Resolution: 350 Pixels/Inch
☑ Resample: Preserve Details 2.0
Reduce Noise: 0 %

03 This example image 2832 pixels wide by 4240 pixels high. Our settings and brushes used are based on an image this size. If you are using images either smaller or larger, you may need to adjust some settings to account for the different sizes in your own image.

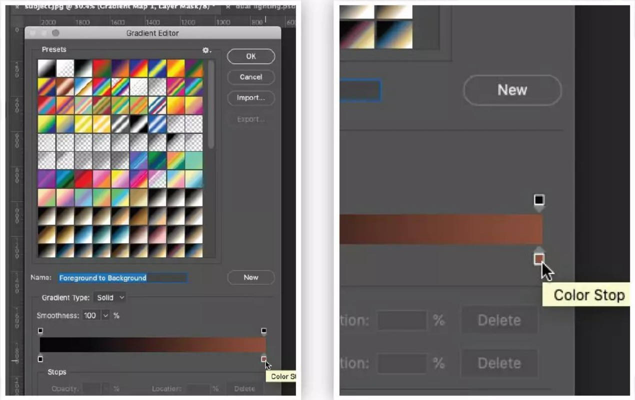

Create new fill or adjustment layer
Channels
Styles
Pattern...
Brightness/Contrast...
Levels...
Curves...
Exposure...
Vibrance...
Hue/Saturation...
Color Balance...
Black & White...
Photo Filter...
Channel Mixer...
Color Lookup...
Invert
Posterize...
Threshold...
Gradient Map...
Selective Color...

04 Now the process of adding the dual colours can begin. Go to the Layer Options panel and and click on Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer. Choose Gradient Map. This will let you remap the pixels in your image to a new colour or series of colours.


Properties
Gradient Map
Click to edit the gradient

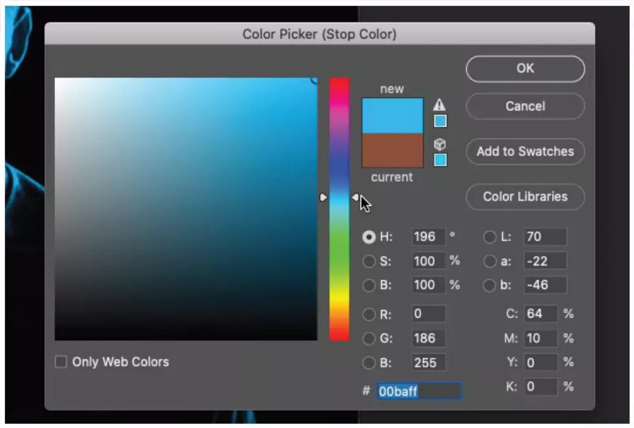
☐ Dither
☐ Reverse
Method: Perceptual

05 The new layer Gradient Map 1 will be added above your base image on its own layer. You can double-click the layer to bring up its properties panel. In the properties panel, click the gradient and it will take you on to the Gradient Editor panel.


Gradient Editor
Presets
OK
Cancel
Import...
Export...
New
Stops
Color Stop
Delete

Name: Foreground to Background
Gradient Type: Solid
Smoothness: 100 %

06 We need to edit the colours used in this gradient. The far left of the gradient is black and that is fine for this image, but we will need to click on the far right Color Stop to change its colour. When you do, the Color Picker below it is activated. Click it to continue.

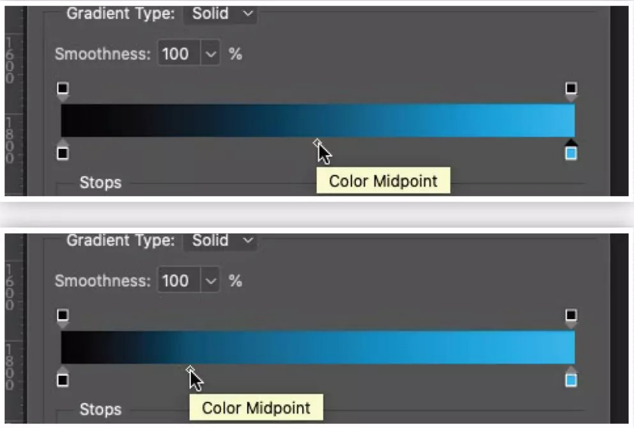


Color Picker (Stop Color)

H: 196 °
S: 100 %
B: 100 %
R: 0
G: 186
B: 255
L: 70
a: -22
b: -46
C: 64 %
M: 10 %
Y: 0 %
K: 0 %
00baff

OK
Cancel
Add to Swatches
Color Libraries
new
current
Only Web Colors

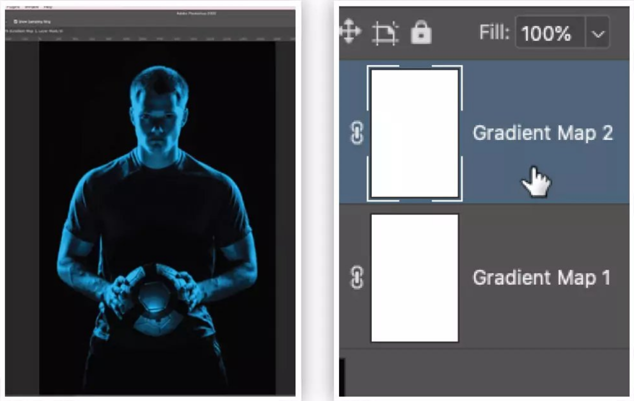
07 When you click the Color Picker, you can choose whatever colour you want from the palette provided and select a nice vibrant colour to use as the first part of the dual lighting effect. In this case, we altered the Color Stop to a bright blue and clicked OK to continue.



Gradient Type: Solid
Smoothness: 100 %

Stops
Color Midpoint
Stops
Color Midpoint

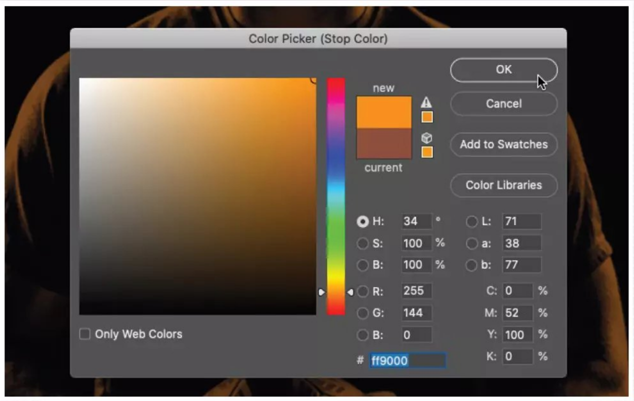
08 The next part is down to personal preference and the brightness of your image, but if you click the Color Midpoint slider and push it to the left, you'll notice that the image increases in brightness. This is because you are mapping blue to more of the mid-tone values in the base image.



Fill: 100%

Gradient Map 2
Gradient Map 1

09 When you are happy with the results, click OK on the Gradient Editor panel to return to the main work in progress. Next, click on the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer button again and add a new Gradient Map 2 layer to your document above the first one.

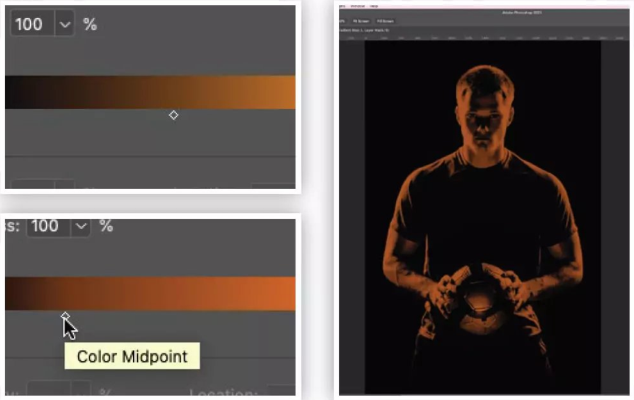


Color Picker (Stop Color)

H: 34 °
S: 100 %
B: 100 %
R: 255
G: 144
B: 0
L: 71
a: 38
b: 77
C: 0 %
M: 52 %
Y: 100 %
K: 0 %
# ff9000

OK
Cancel
Add to Swatches
Color Libraries
new
current
Only Web Colors

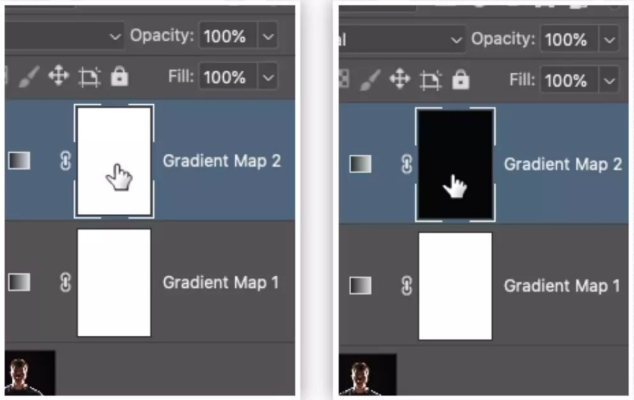
10 Now go through the Gradient Editor process as you have just done and this time create a gradient that goes from Black on the far left, to a bright orange on the right by clicking on the right Color Stop again and choosing a bright colour from the Color Picker.



100 %
s: 100 %

Color Midpoint

11 Once again, you can slide the Color Midpoint to the left to increase the brightness and inject more orange into the darker areas and mid-tone areas. The orange is the second colour you'll use in the dual lighting effect. When you're happy, click OK to proceed.

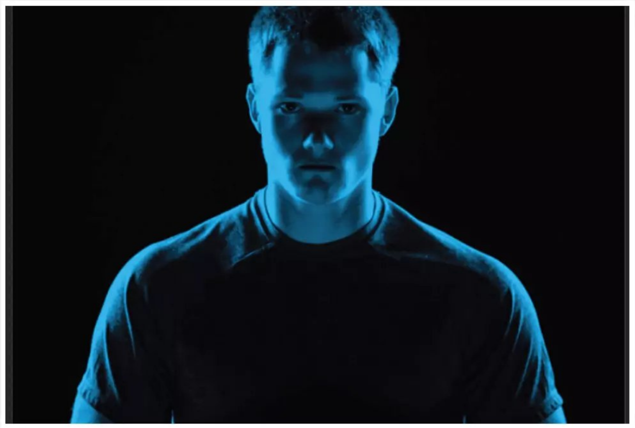


Opacity: 100%
Fill: 100%

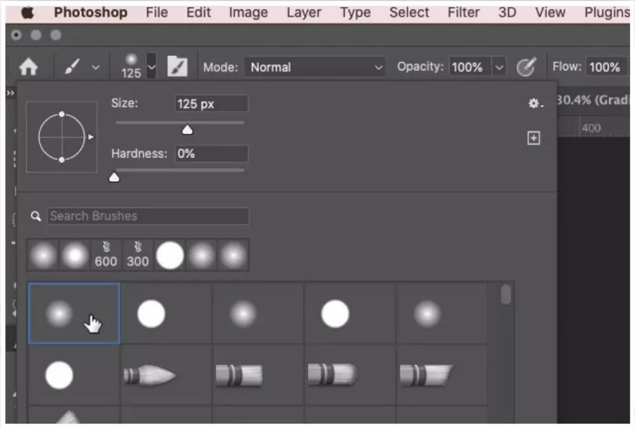
Opacity: 100%
Fill: 100%

Gradient Map 2
Gradient Map 1
Gradient Map 2
Gradient Map 1

12 We've decided that the footballer will be lit with a blue light on the left side of his body and the orange will light him on the right side. Click on the layer mask thumbnail of Gradient Map 2 and press Cmd + I to invert the mask, which is currently white, to black.

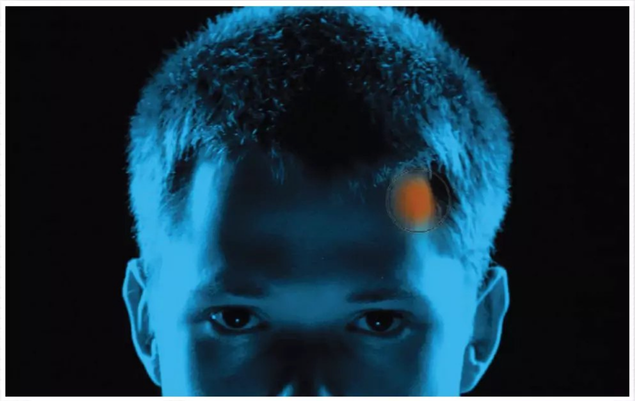


13 The orange gradient is hidden for the moment since the mask has now been inverted to black. Always remember that in masking terms, black conceals and white reveals pixels. What we need to do now is selectively reveal areas of the orange gradient map on our footballer.

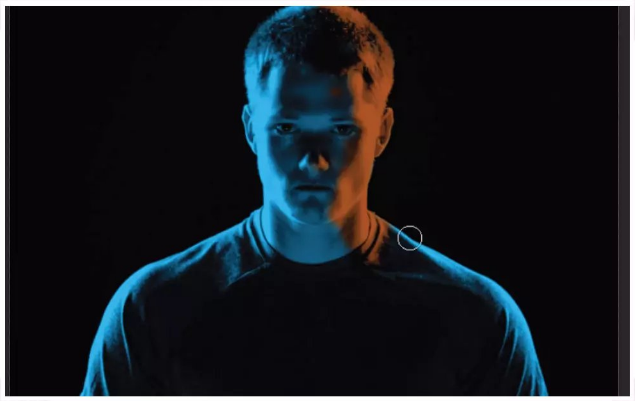


Mode: Normal
Opacity: 100%
Flow: 100%
Size: 125 px
Hardness: 0%

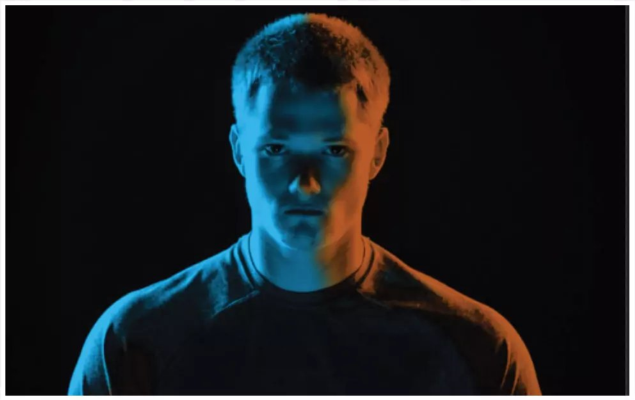
14 Go over to the toolbar and select the Brush Too (B)l. Then, in the Tool Options panel at the top of the document, adjust the brush size to about 125 pixels and make sure Hardness is 0%. Then make sure the Foreground Color is set to white before you proceed.



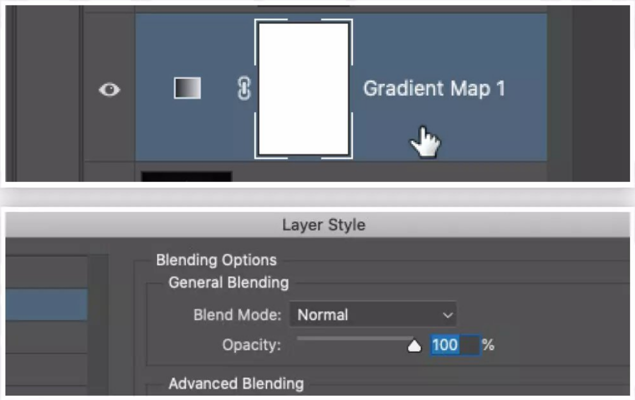
15 With the Gradient Map 2 layer mask selected, begin paint white onto the mask in the areas you want the orange colour to appear. Since we want it to look like he's being lit by an orange light from the right-hand side, choose the brightest areas on the right of his body.



16 As you paint white on the mask, more and more of the orange gradient map will appear turning his skin that colour. If you paint an area you didn't want orange, switch the foreground colour to black and conceal those unwanted areas, then switch back to white.

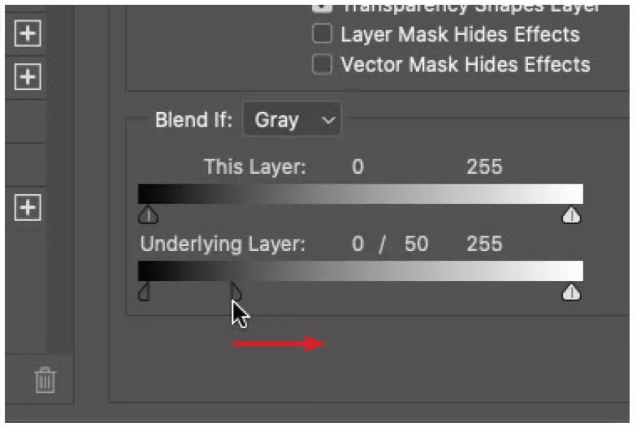


17 After a bit of trial and error with the application of the brush strokes, blends and chosen areas, we got a result we quite liked. The effect of being lit with two different coloured studio lights is working well. Next, we want to blend those colours into the subject a bit more realistically.



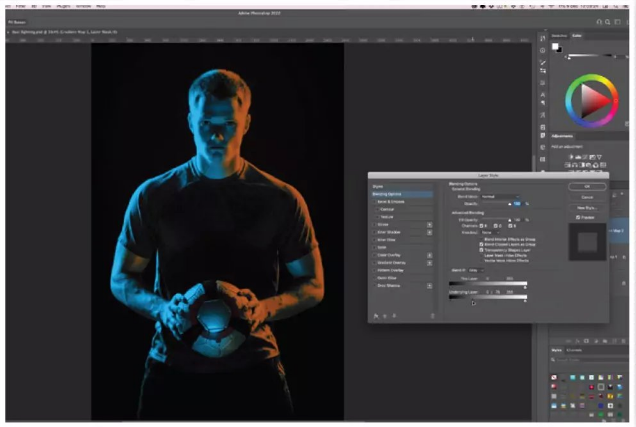
Blend Mode: Normal
Opacity: 100 %

18 Next, double-click the Gradient Map 1 layer and it will open the Layer Style panel. We will use the Blend If properties to blend this coloured layer into the base image below in a more realistic way by letting more of the base layer's darker colour show through the layer above.

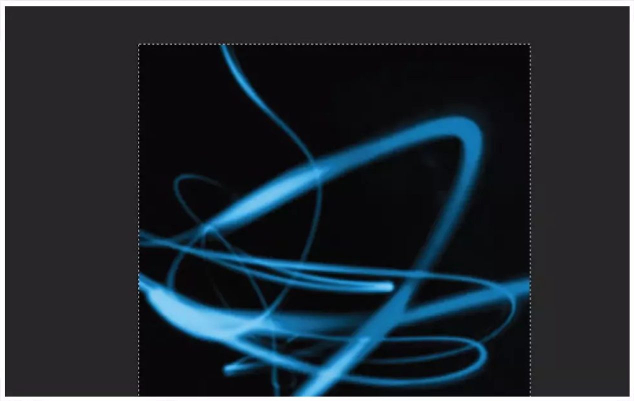

Transparency Shapes Layer
☐ Layer Mask Hides Effects
☐ Vector Mask Hides Effects

Blend If: Gray
This Layer: 0 255
Underlying Layer: 0 / 50 255

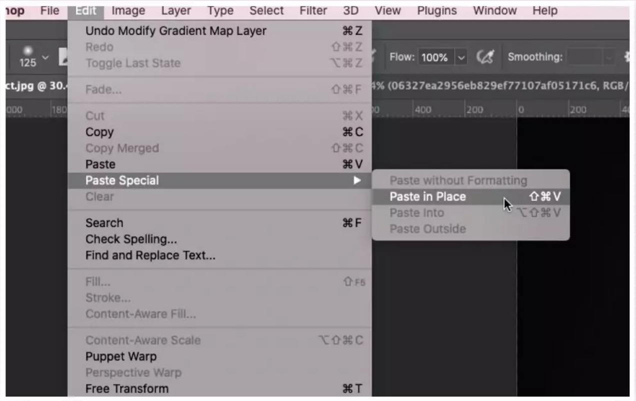
19 To use the Blend If function, Alt + Left-Click on the left-most Underlying Layer tab to split it in half. Splitting it allows for much finer blend control. Drag the right half of the tab to the right. This will allow the subtle blending of the base layer's darker areas with those of the bright blue gradient map layer.



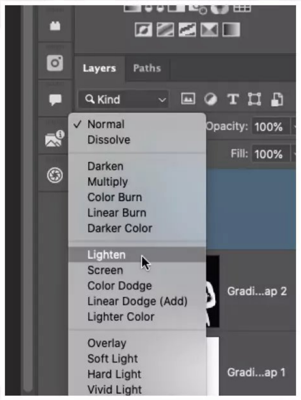
20 Now it's time to perform the same action with the orange Gradient Map 2 layer. The effect you get from it can be subtle, but it means both the coloured gradient maps are blended into the original image. Next, let's add a little bit of a flourish to finish the image off.

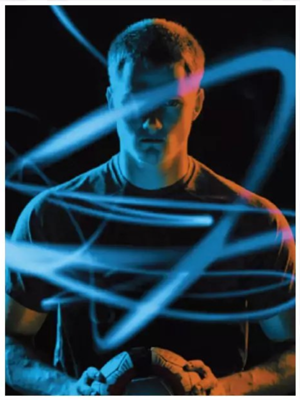


21 We've got a nice light painting image off a free image site that we want to combine with our main image. We have an example called 'light.jpg' that we opened in a separate document. We then pressed Cmd + A to select all pixels and then pressed Cmd + C to copy it.

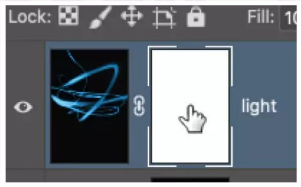

File Edit Image Layer Type Select Filter 3D View Plugins Window Help
Undo Modify Gradient Map Layer ⌘Z
Redo ⇧⌘Z
Toggle Last State ⌥⌘Z
Fade... ⇧⌘F
Cut ⌘X
Copy ⌘C
Copy Merged ⇧⌘C
Paste ⌘V
Paste Special
Clear
Search ⌘F
Check Spelling...
Find and Replace Text...
Fill... ⇧F5
Stroke...
Content-Aware Fill...
Content-Aware Scale ⌥⇧⌘C
Puppet Warp
Perspective Warp
Free Transform ⌘T
Paste without Formatting
Paste in Place ⇧⌘V
Paste Into ⌥⇧⌘V
Paste Outside
Flow: 100%
Smoothing:

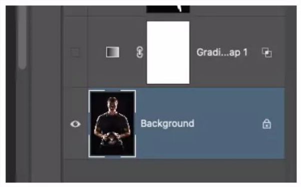
22 Back in our main document, you can paste the image you just copied to the clipboard using Cmd + V, or if the copy is the same size as your main document, Shift + Cmd + V to paste it in place. Obviously the light painting image covers the footballer but we can address that next.

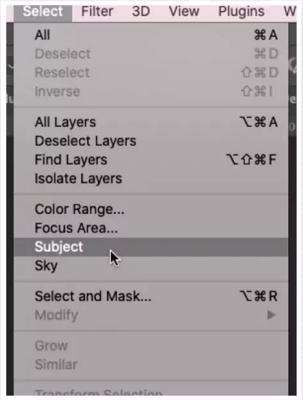

Layers Paths
Kind
Opacity: 100%
Fill: 100%
✓ Normal
Dissolve
Darken
Multiply
Color Burn
Linear Burn
Darker Color
Lighten
Screen
Color Dodge
Linear Dodge (Add)
Lighter Color
Overlay
Soft Light
Hard Light
Vivid Light
Gradi...ap 2
Gradi...ap 1



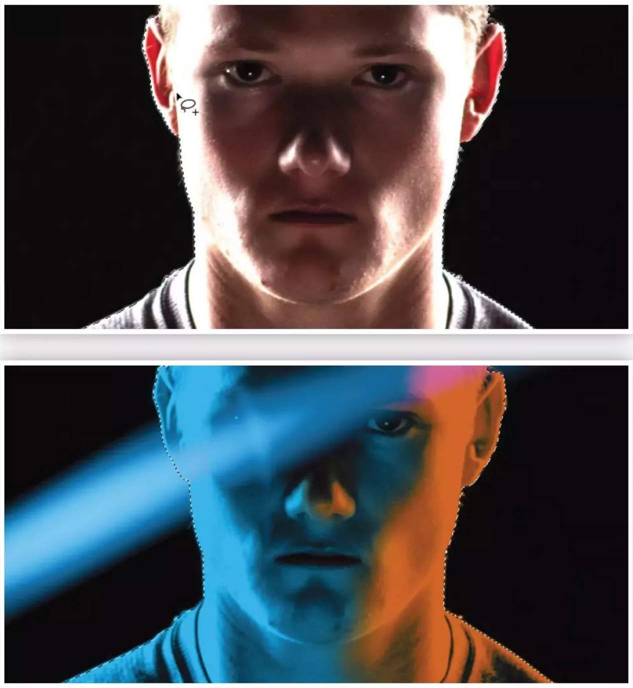
23 Make sure the 'light' layer is at the top of the layer stack. Now we can change its Blend Mode to Lighten. In this case, only pixels brighter than 50% grey will show up. Darker pixels are effectively invisible revealing the footballer underneath. The next problem is uncovering the footballer's face.


Lock:
Fill:
light

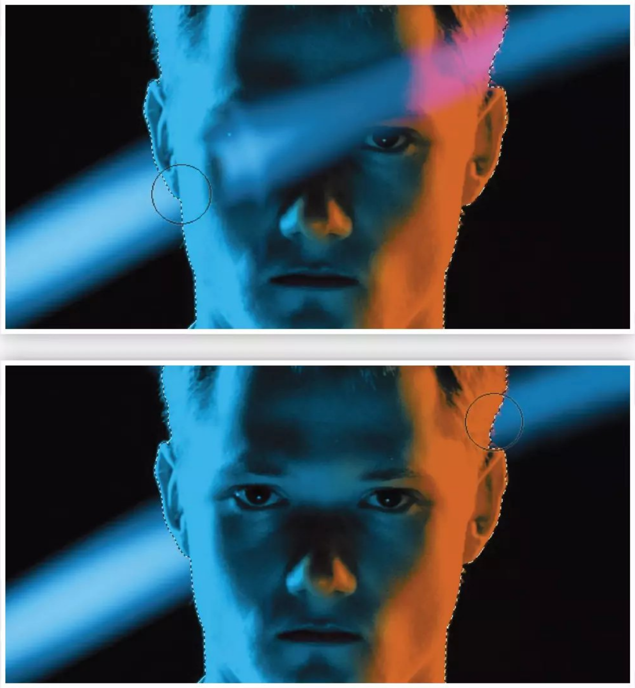

Gradi...ap 1
Background


Select Filter 3D View Plugins W
All ⌘A
Deselect ⌘D
Reselect ⇧⌘D
Inverse ⇧⌘I
All Layers ⌥⌘A
Deselect Layers
Find Layers ⌥⇧⌘F
Isolate Layers
Color Range...
Focus Area...
Subject
Sky
Select and Mask... ⌥⌘R
Modify
Grow
Similar
Transform Selection

24 Keep the 'light' layer active and click on the Add Layer Mask button in the layer options panel. Now, for the moment, make all layers invisible except the base image and make that active and go to Select > Subject which will automatically scan the image and make a selection of the footballer.

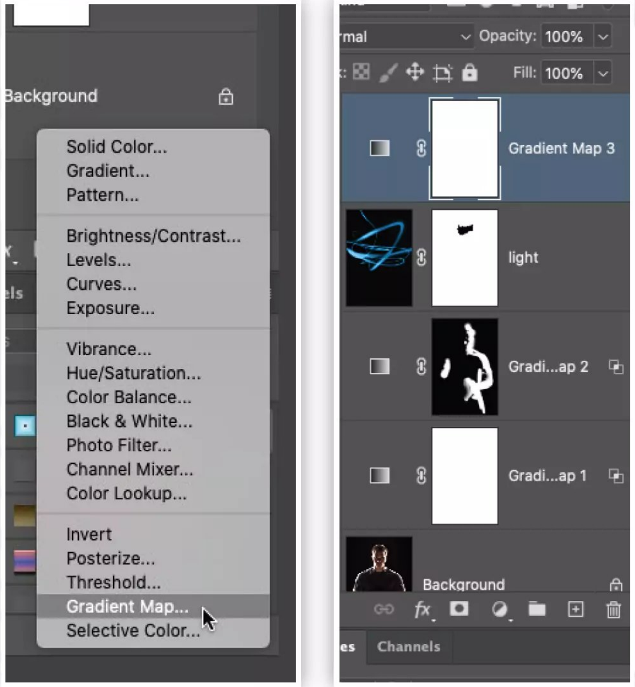


25 Make sure you keep the selection of the footballer active and make all layers visible again. Then click on the Layer Mask thumbnail of the 'light' layer. Choose the Brush Tool and use a small black brush of about 125 pixels to paint across the area where the footballer's face is obscured.

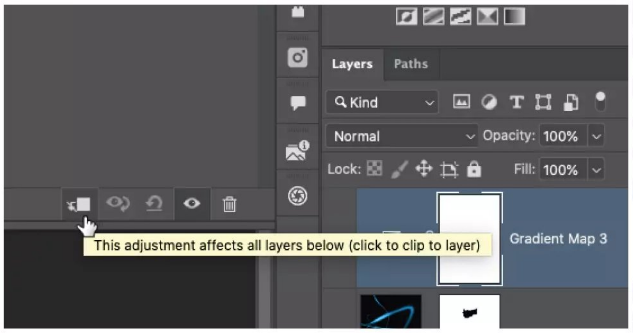


26 As you paint, the footballer's face is revealed with each stroke. The selection you made of his outline is creating a nice crisp mask and each brush stroke is constrained by the selection so you don't paint anything other than the inside of the selected area. So far, so good. Let's keep going.

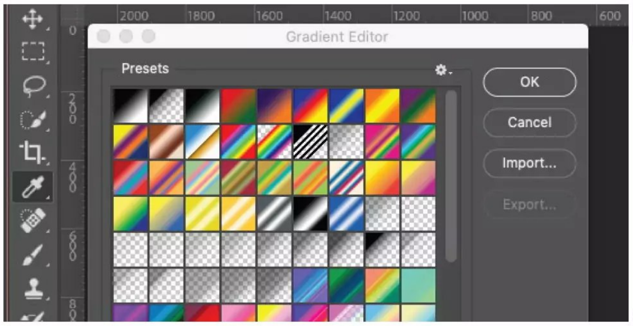
27 The 'light' layer is just a single colour blue at the moment, but it would be nice to be able to colour a part of the light paint effect to match the orange glow on his right-hand side as if the swirling light pattern is responsible for creating the blue and orange lighting effect on his body.


Background
Solid Color...
Gradient...
Pattern...
Brightness/Contrast...
Levels...
Curves...
Exposure...
Vibrance...
Hue/Saturation...
Color Balance...
Black & White...
Photo Filter...
Channel Mixer...
Color Lookup...
Invert
Posterize...
Threshold...
Gradient Map...
Selective Color...
Opacity: 100%
Fill: 100%
Gradient Map 3
light
Gradi...ap 2
Gradi...ap 1
Background
Channels

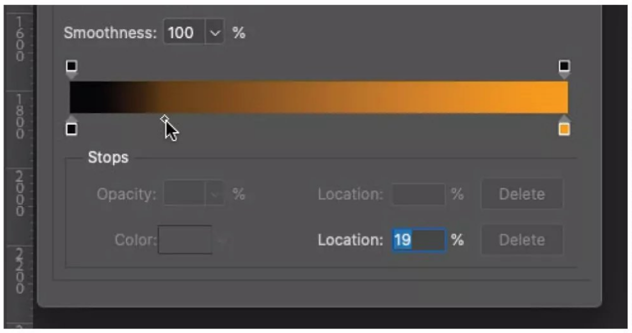
28 Keep the 'light' layer active and go to the Layer Options panel below the layers panel and click the New Fill or Adjustment Layer button and choose Gradient Map again. A new layer called Gradient Map 3 will be added to the top of the layer stack with a Layer Mask in place.


Layers
Paths
Kind
Normal
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
Gradient Map 3

This adjustment affects all layers below (click to clip to layer)

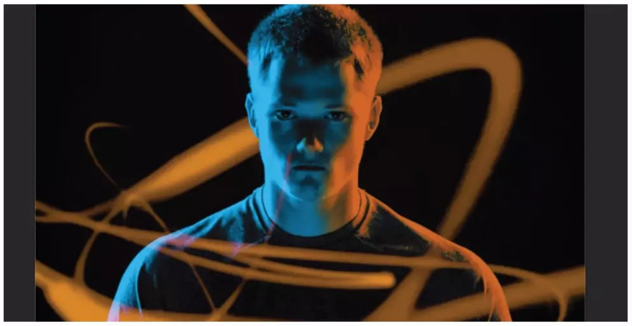

Gradient Editor
Presets
OK
Cancel
Import...
Export...

29 Double-click this new gradient map layer to open its properties and click on the Clip to Layer button to make sure this adjustment only affects the 'light' layer below it and nothing else. Then click the gradient to enter the Gradient Editor like you did before.

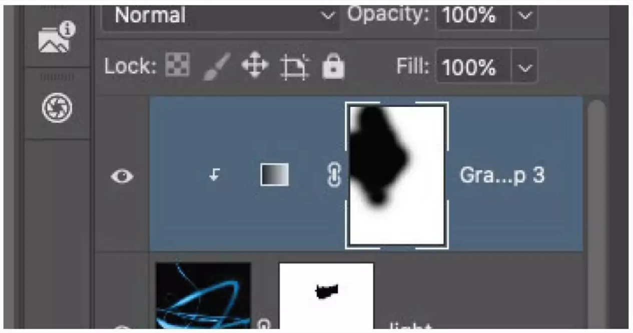

Stops
Opacity:
%
Location:
%
Delete
Color:
Delete

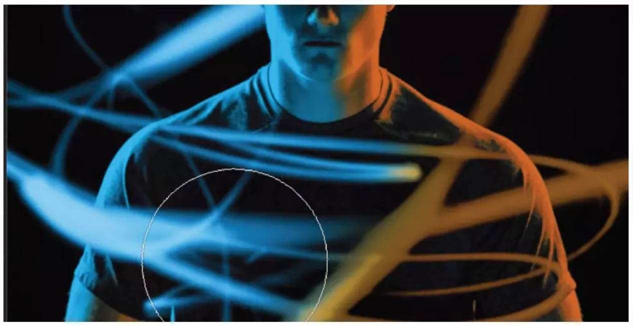
Smoothness: 100 %

Location: 19 %

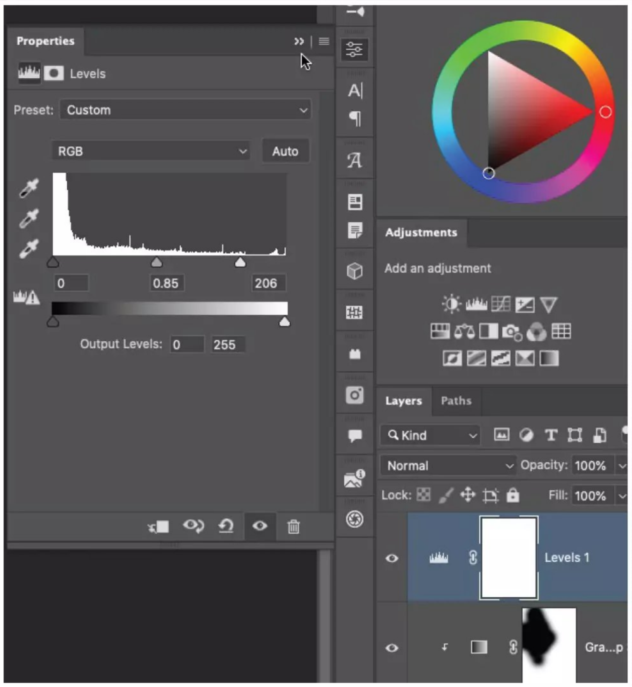


30 Once you are back in the Gradient Editor, choose an orange gradient and adjust the Midpoint slider to suit your preference for brightness. Click OK and you'll see that the light swirl image is now turned completely orange. That's ok since we can use the mask to conceal some of it.


Normal
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
Gra...p 3



31 Click the Gradient Map 3 layer mask to make sure it is active and choose the Brush Tool from the toolbar. Use a soft black brush to paint on the mask revealing the original blue swirl pattern on the left side of the footballer's body once more, leaving orange areas on the right.

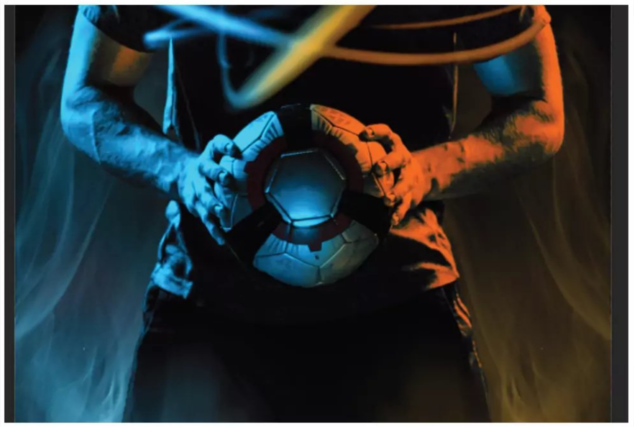

Properties
Levels
RGB
Auto
Adjustments
Add an adjustment
Layers
Paths
Kind
Normal
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
Levels 1
Gra...p

Preset: Custom

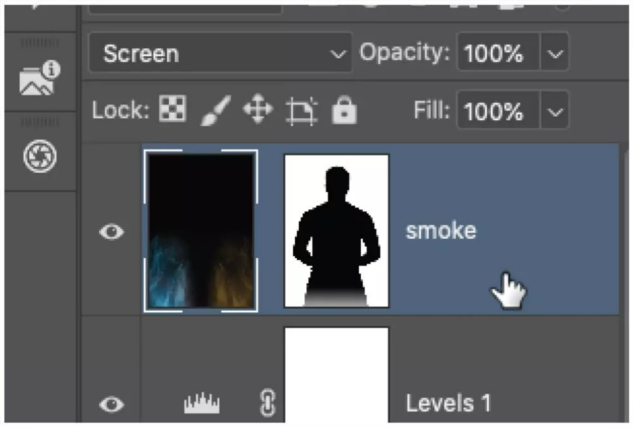
0 0.85 206

Output Levels: 0 255

32 At this point we thought the image could use a little punch, so we added a Levels adjustment layer at the top of the layer stack and increased the brightness of the highlight areas and the mid-tones too. The brighter image is now looking very vivid and dramatic.

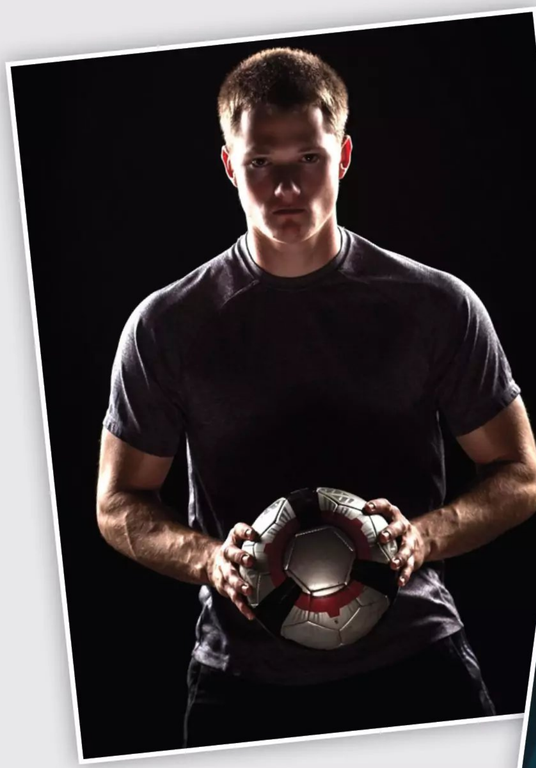


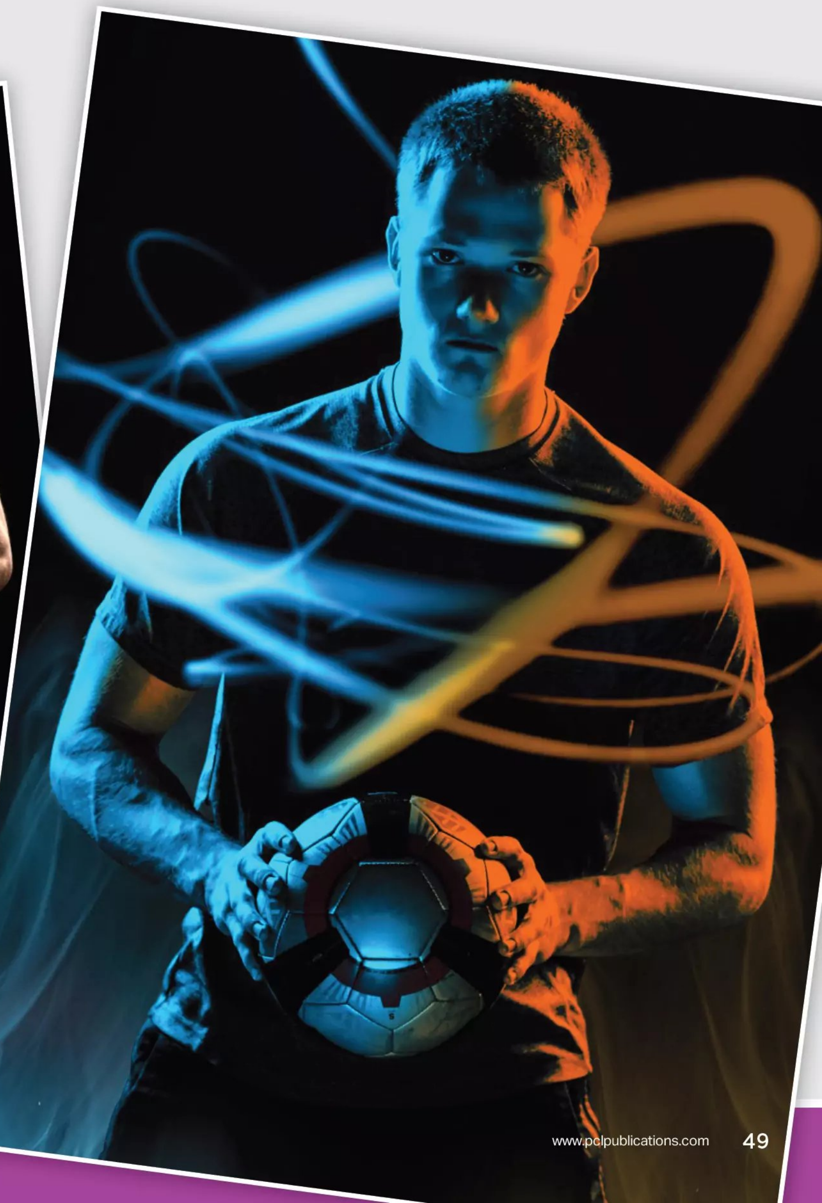
33 For a final effect, we added an image of blue and orange smoke. We then used the same Select > Subject technique to create a mask that when filled black, made the smoke look like it was sitting behind our main subject.



Screen
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
smoke
Levels 1

34 A small amount of a white gradient fill on the mask at the bottom of the image created the effect of some smoke rising around his waist. With that, the image with the dual lighting effect was complete.

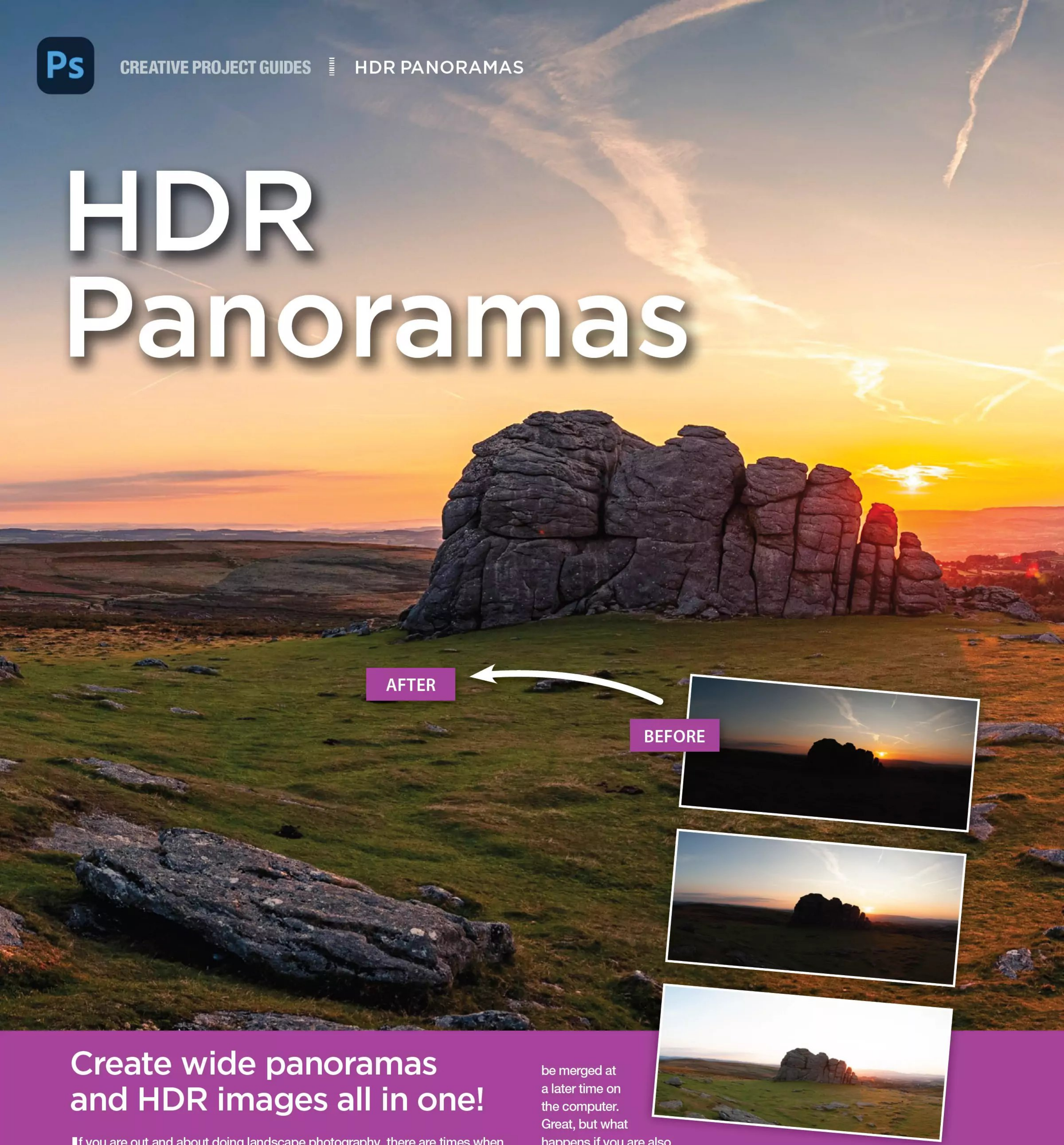




Light fantastic!

Gradient maps can create cool light effects in Photoshop.

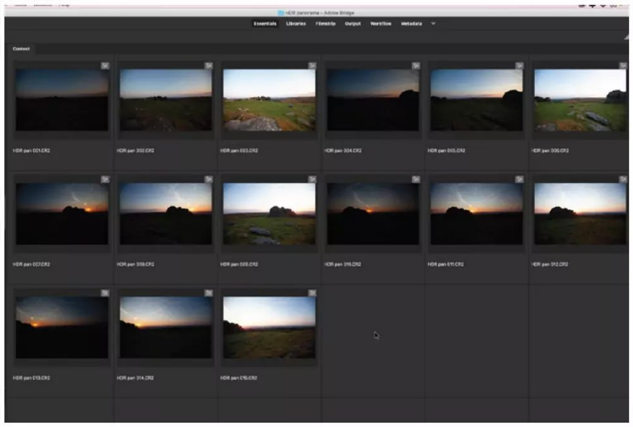
HDR Panoramas



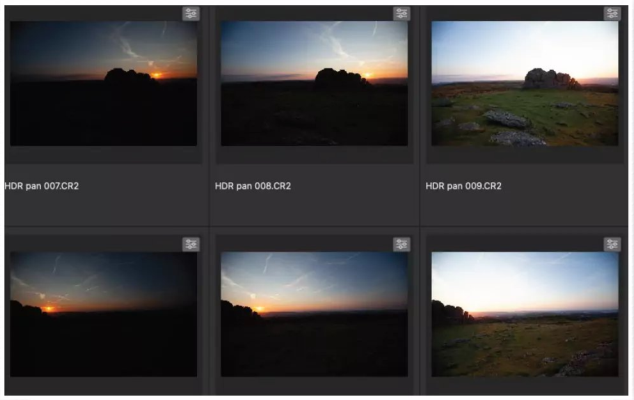
Create wide panoramas and HDR images all in one!

If you are out and about doing landscape photography, there are times when you are faced with some compositional and technical challenges that could affect the quality and overall impact of your photos. One area that regularly demands your attention is that of exposure and getting a beautifully balanced tonal range. When trying to photograph scenes of very high contrast, that can be a very tall order. A lot of photographers will employ the HDR (high dynamic range) technique. This is where they will shoot the scene at three or more different exposures, capturing a much larger range of tonal values that can be merged at a later time on the computer. Great, but what happens if you are also tasked with shooting a very wide panoramic shot that cannot be captured in one go? You would need to create a series of images where you pan from left to right, capturing a series of narrower, overlapping slices of the scene, then splicing those together into a wide-angle shot on your computer. Now imagine trying to do a super-wide panorama in HDR as well? How would you go about processing all those images and creating a viable HDR panorama at the end?

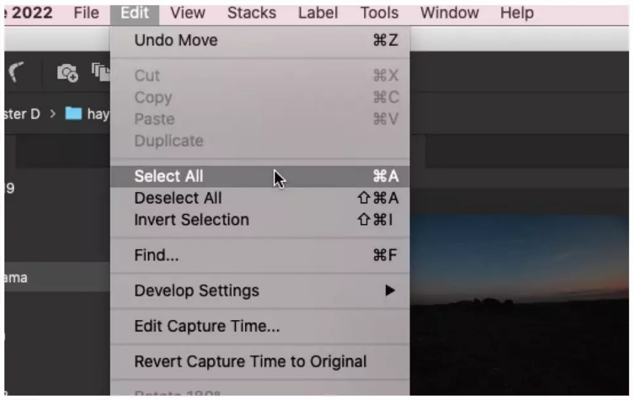
01 As luck would have it, Photoshop and its accompanying digital darkroom - Camera Raw, have everything you need to be able to assemble the multiple images and multiple exposures into one final image that you can process as if it were an in-camera original shot taken out in the field.



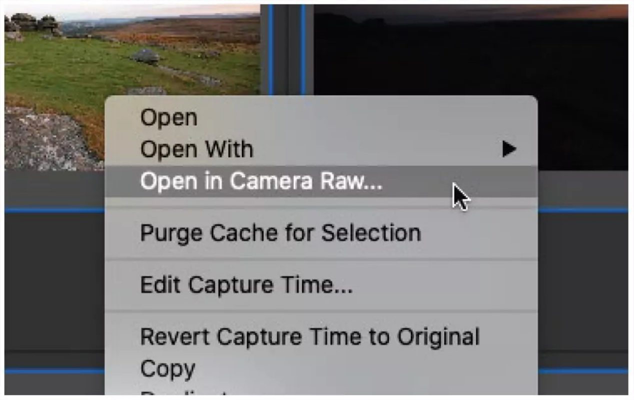
02 Our example is a super-wide HDR shot that needs to be assembled and processed. It is comprised of 5 x 3-shot HDR images where the camera was panned left to right to capture a much wider area than could be captured with one shot alone. So we have 15 images that need to be combined.


HDR pan 007.CR2
HDR pan 008.CR2
HDR pan 009.CR2

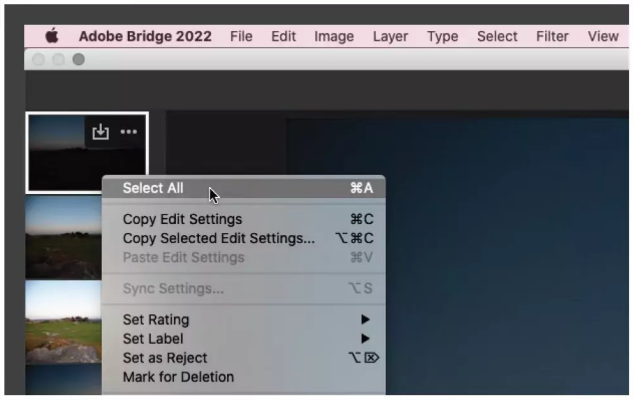
03 Each three shot HDR capture comprises one average exposure, one that is underexposed to keep detail in the sky and one that is overexposed so there is detail in the foreground. When merged and processed, it simulates an image that has more tonal data similar to what the human eye sees.


2022 File Edit View Stacks Label Tools Window Help
Undo Move ⌘Z
Cut ⌘X
Copy ⌘C
Paste ⌘V
Duplicate
Select All ⌘A
Deselect All ⇧⌘A
Invert Selection ⇧⌘I
Find... ⌘F
Develop Settings ▶
Edit Capture Time...
Revert Capture Time to Original

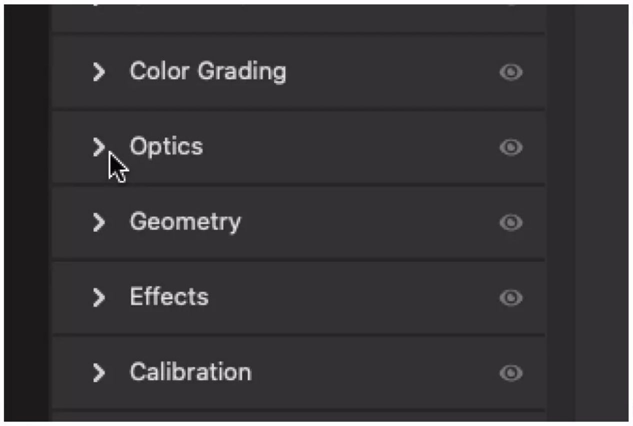
04 The key to a successful merge is to work on all the images and apply all the same adjustments at the same time. To do this, you can open Adobe Bridge and navigate to where your images are stored. You can press Cmd + A to select all of them, or choose Edit > Select All in the top menu bar.


Open
Open With ▶
Open in Camera Raw...
Purge Cache for Selection
Edit Capture Time...
Revert Capture Time to Original
Copy

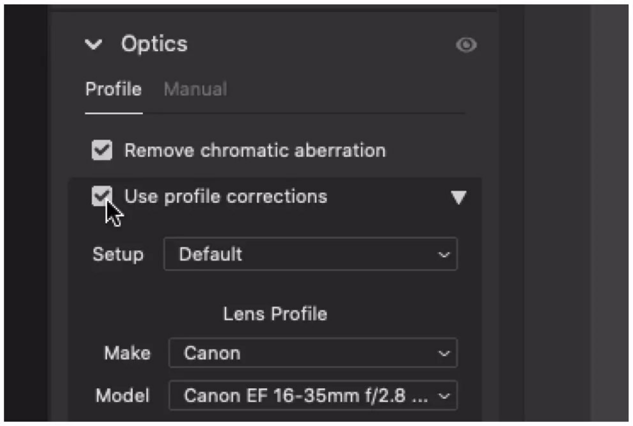
05 All the images will be selected. Now you can right-click any of the images and choose Open in Camera Raw. This will open up Camera Raw and depending on how you have your filmstrip positioned, it will display all the images in your HDR panorama sequence down the left side or along the bottom.


Adobe Bridge 2022 File Edit Image Layer Type Select Filter View
Select All ⌘A
Copy Edit Settings ⌘C
Copy Selected Edit Settings... ⌥⌘C
Paste Edit Settings ⌘V
Sync Settings... ⌥S
Set Rating ▶
Set Label ▶
Set as Reject ⌥⌦
Mark for Deletion

06 Right-click any one of your images and choose Select All (Cmd + A) from the menu. This will select all 15 of the images so any changes made, will be applied to all of them at the same time. Once you're happy all images are highlighted, you can start the basic adjustments process.

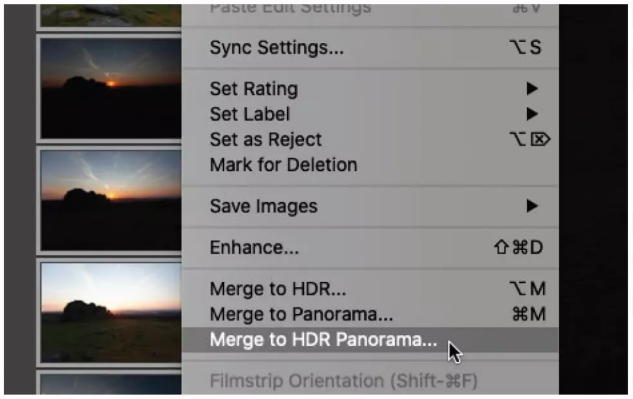

Color Grading
Optics
Geometry
Effects
Calibration

07 Since the images were taken on a Canon 5DMK3 digital camera with a 16-35mm wide-angle lens, there will be some barrel distortion present that Camera Raw can eliminate for you. Over in the main control panel on the right, click on the Optics tab to reveal the corrections that can be made.

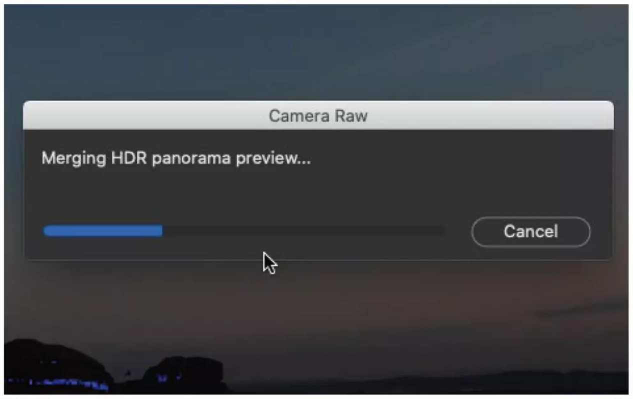

Optics
Profile
Manual
Lens Profile

☑ Remove chromatic aberration
☑ Use profile corrections
Setup: Default
Make: Canon
Model: Canon EF 16-35mm f/2.8 ...

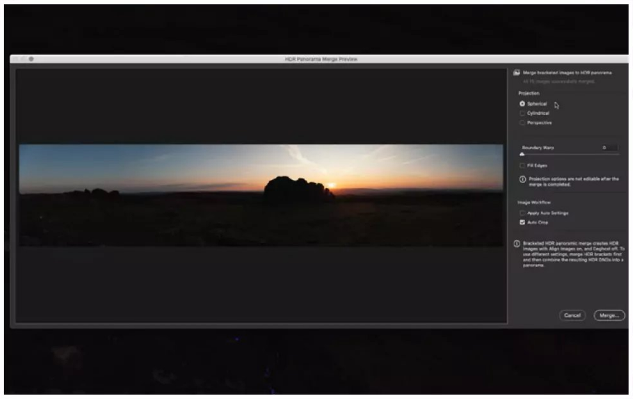
08 If you click on both the Remove Chromatic Aberration and the Use Profile Corrections buttons, it will asses your image and remove any optical issues created by the lens used at the time of capture. It correctly identified the lens that was used and removed the distortion.


Paste Edit Settings ⌘V
Sync Settings... ⌥S
Set Rating
Set Label
Set as Reject ⌥⌦
Mark for Deletion
Save Images
Enhance... ⇧⌘D
Merge to HDR... ⌥M
Merge to Panorama... ⌘M
Merge to HDR Panorama...
Filmstrip Orientation (Shift-⌘F)

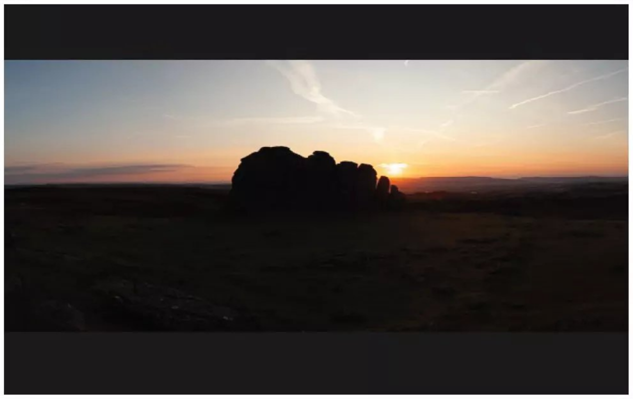
09 You could opt to try and add a number of exposure adjustments at this point, but it is actually at this moment, you can right-click an image over in the filmstrip and choose the Merge to HDR Panorama option. Any adjustments can easily be made once the HDR panorama has been created.


Camera Raw
Merging HDR panorama preview...

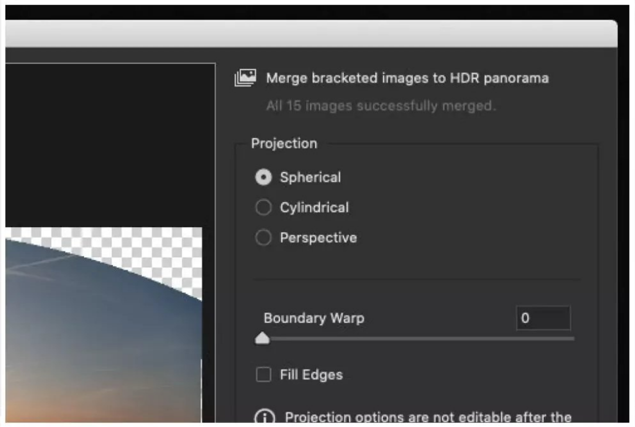
10 A word of warning here. As the process begins, it may take some time to both merge the HDR sequences and then create the panoramic image from all 15 images. Imagine if you captured a 7 x 5-shot HDR sequence. You would now be waiting for 35 photos to be merged and a panorama created.



11 As long as you have plenty of overlap between the shots, Camera Raw should be able to identify anchor points and successfully stitch the images together. It analyses each image and aligns them to make sure they are as sharp as possible. When done, it will display a Merge Preview for you.



12 At first the image may look a bit underwhelming. You have a very dark foreground and a bright sky. Bear in mind that the image now contains much more tonal information than just one single image alone. This extra data just need to be coaxed out of the image for a perfect HDR image.



Merge bracketed images to HDR panorama

All 15 images successfully merged.

Projection

● Spherical

○ Cylindrical

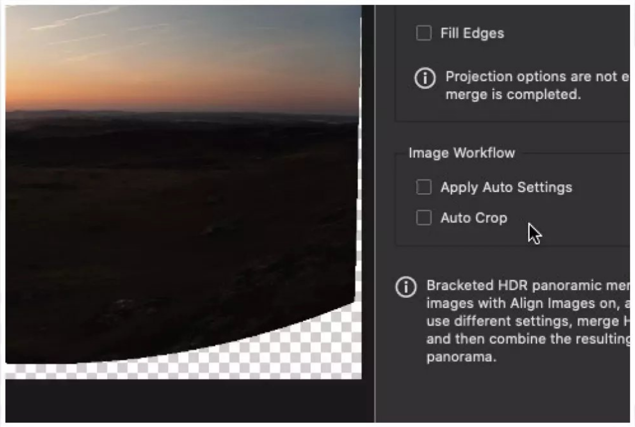
○ Perspective

Boundary Warp 0

☐ Fill Edges

Projection options are not editable after the

13 If you look at the Merge Preview options, you have a number of tweaks you can make before you commit to creating the final merged panorama. The Projection option lets you choose if the image is mapped to a sphere, a cylinder or is set to show near or far objects in a more extreme way.



☐ Fill Edges

Projection options are not e
merge is completed.

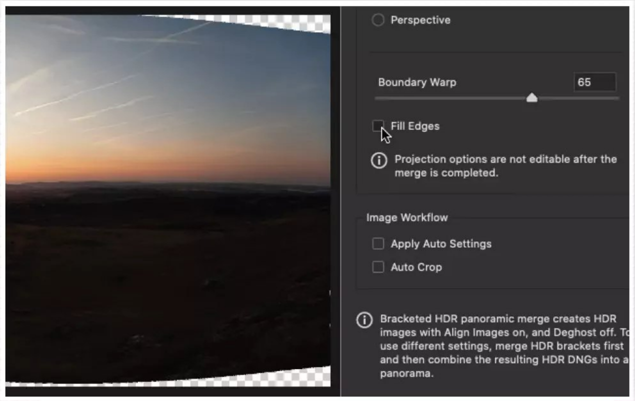
Image Workflow

☐ Apply Auto Settings

☐ Auto Crop

Bracketed HDR panoramic mer
images with Align Images on, a
use different settings, merge H
and then combine the resulting
panorama.

14 Spherical is the default option and the most commonly used. Also on by default is the Auto Crop feature, if you turn it off, you can see a preview of the entire image and preview how the 5 segments were warped and stitched together leaving gaps around the perimeter of the scene.



○ Perspective

Boundary Warp 65

☐ Fill Edges

Projection options are not editable after the merge is completed.

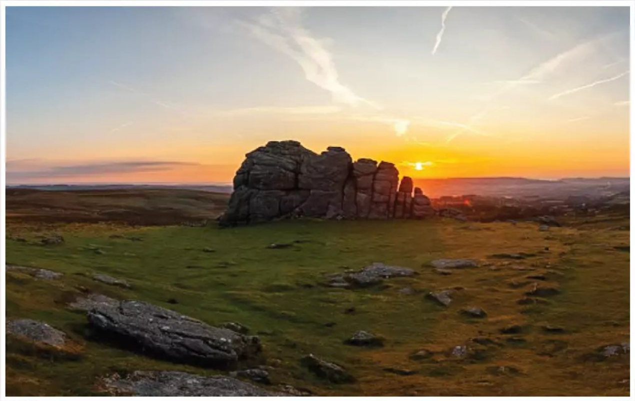
Image Workflow

☐ Apply Auto Settings

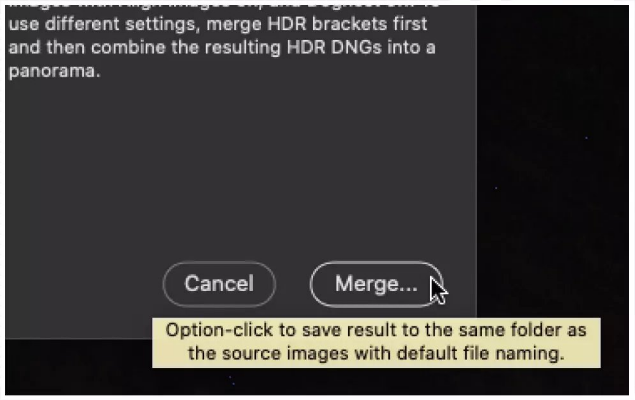
☐ Auto Crop

Bracketed HDR panoramic merge creates HDR images with Align Images on, and Deghost off. To use different settings, merge HDR brackets first and then combine the resulting HDR DNGs into a panorama.

15 You can alter the Boundary Warp value by moving the slider to the right. As you do, the image will be warped in an attempt to plug the gap between the image and the blank areas left by the stitching and warping process. We opted Warp 65 and clicking the Fill Edges button to fill the gap.



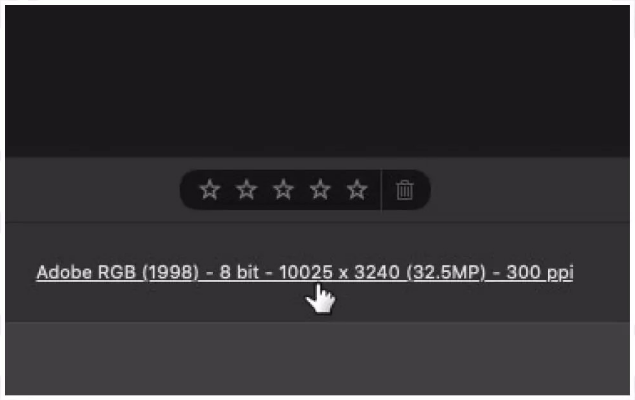
16 We now have the base image ready. The edges have been filled with Content-Aware pixels. The only other option you may want to look at is the Apply Auto Settings button. This will assess the image and apply some default adjustments to get you started. One click and the image transforms!



use different settings, merge HDR brackets first and then combine the resulting HDR DNGs into a panorama.

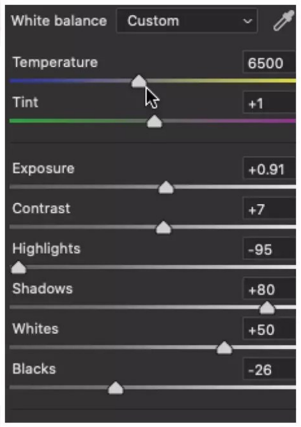
Option-click to save result to the same folder as the source images with default file naming.

17 Now you can click the Merge button and type a name for the result in the Merge Result window. When done, your HDR, merged panorama will appear on the screen. The auto settings have actually done a great job. The highlights have been darkened and shadows eliminated for a balanced shot.

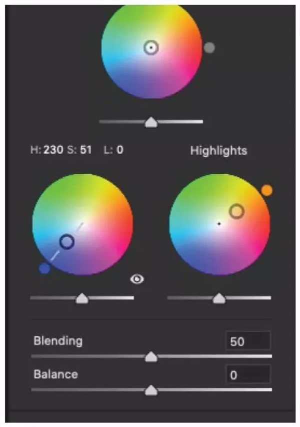


Adobe RGB (1998) - 8 bit - 10025 x 3240 (32.5MP) - 300 ppi

18 If you look at the image information at the bottom of the screen, you will see that the combined images now gives you a panorama that is 10025 pixels wide by 3240 pixels high and has a file size of 32.5MP. If you also look at the Basic adjustments, you can see how the Auto settings altered them.

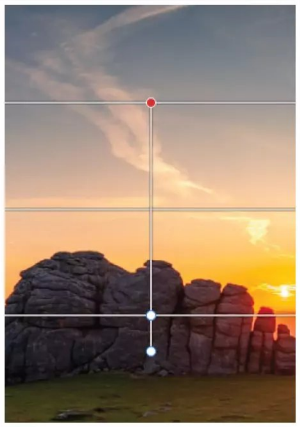


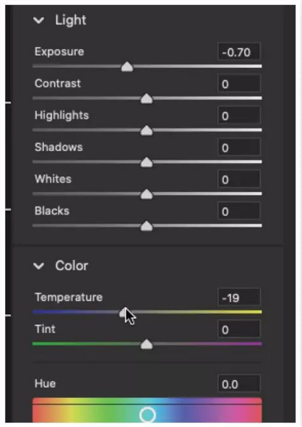
White balance Custom
Temperature 6500
Tint +1
Exposure +0.91
Contrast +7
Highlights -95
Shadows +80
Whites +50
Blacks -26



H: 230 S: 51 L: 0
Highlights
Blending 50
Balance 0

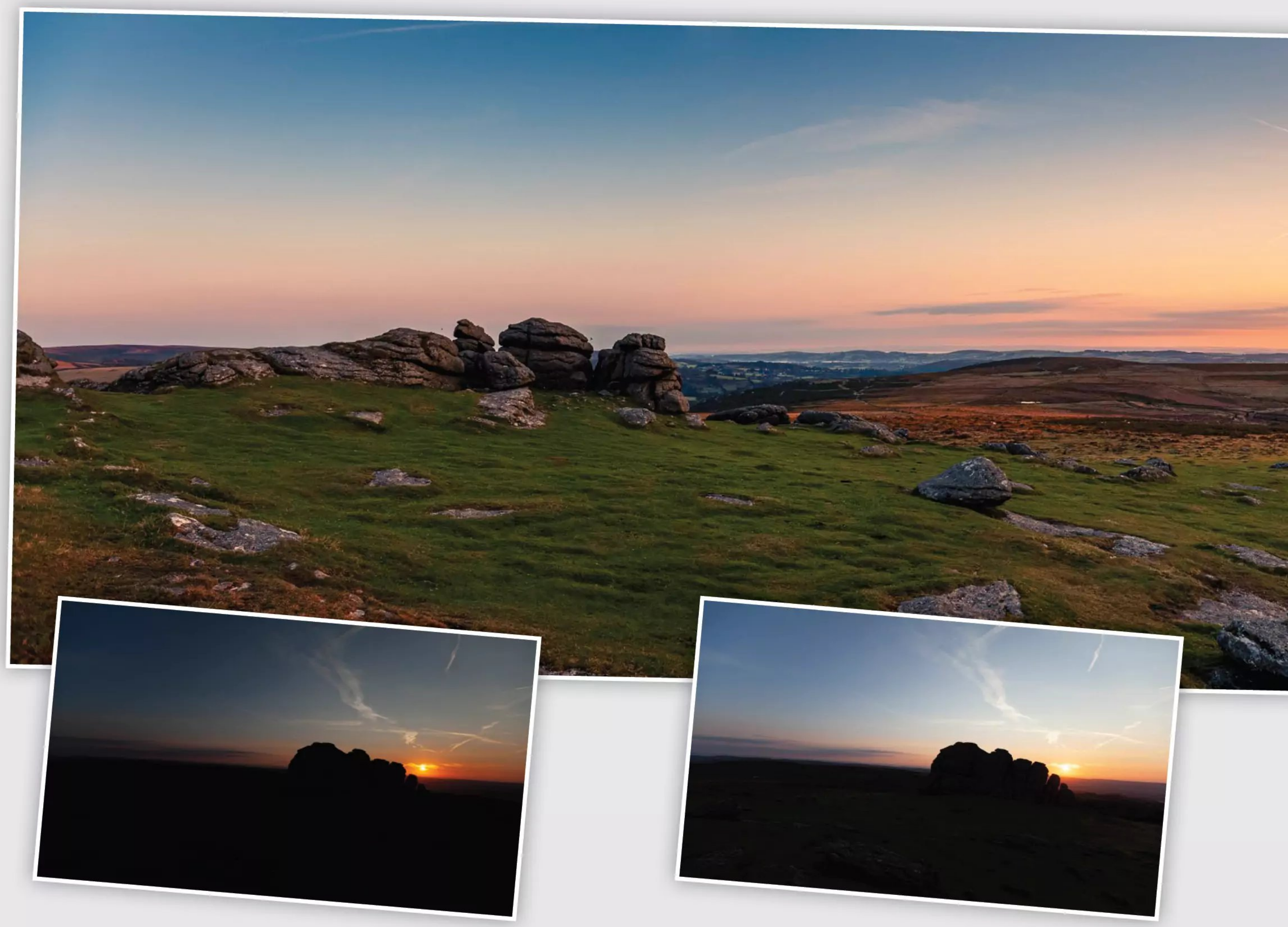
19 We were pretty happy with the auto results and made just a few simple adjustments to finish it off. We added more warmth to the image by increasing the Temperature up to 6500 and under the Colour Grading tab, we injected some blue into the shadows and yellow into the highlights.

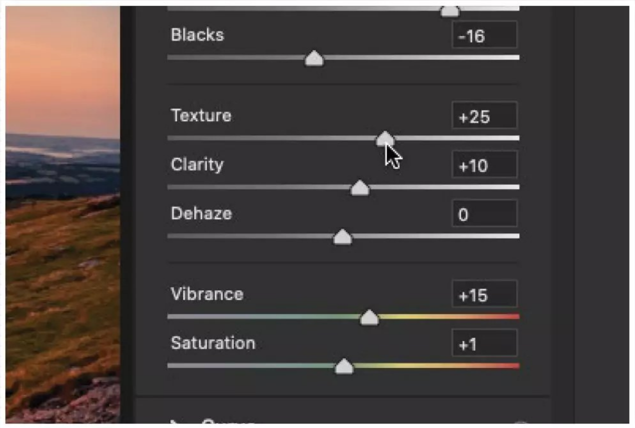




Light
Exposure -0.70
Contrast 0
Highlights 0
Shadows 0
Whites 0
Blacks 0
Color
Temperature -19
Tint 0
Hue 0.0

20 We then clicked on the Masking button and added a Linear Gradient (G). The gradient was added to the top of the image and dragged down to the horizon. We then used the Light controls to darken the sky a little and used the Temperature slider to add just a shade more blue to it.





Blacks -16

Texture +25

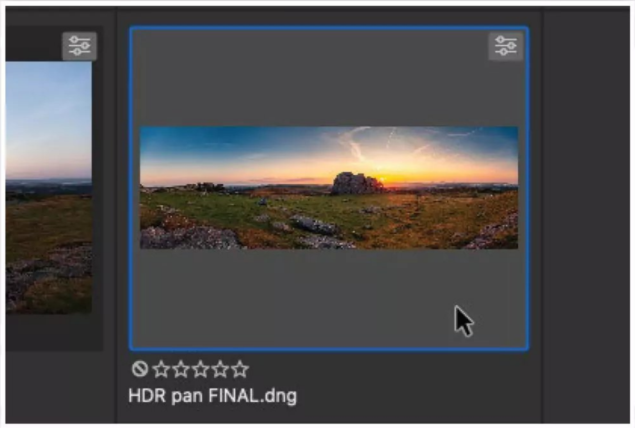
Clarity +10

Dehaze 0

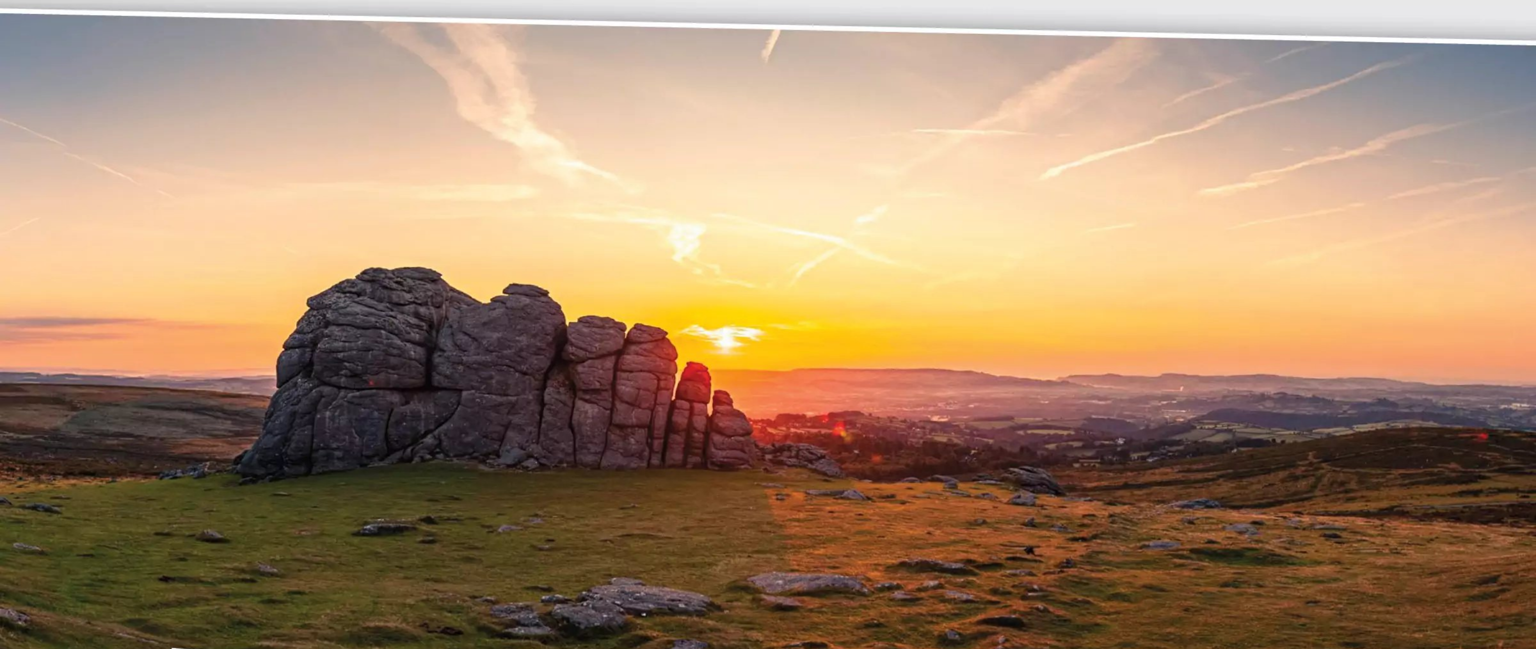
Vibrance +15

Saturation +1

21 We tweaked the exposure just a little and then went down to the Texture, Clarity and Dehaze sliders and increased Texture to bring more detail into the image, as well as increasing the Clarity to boost micro-contrast. A little more Vibrance and Saturation completed the image.

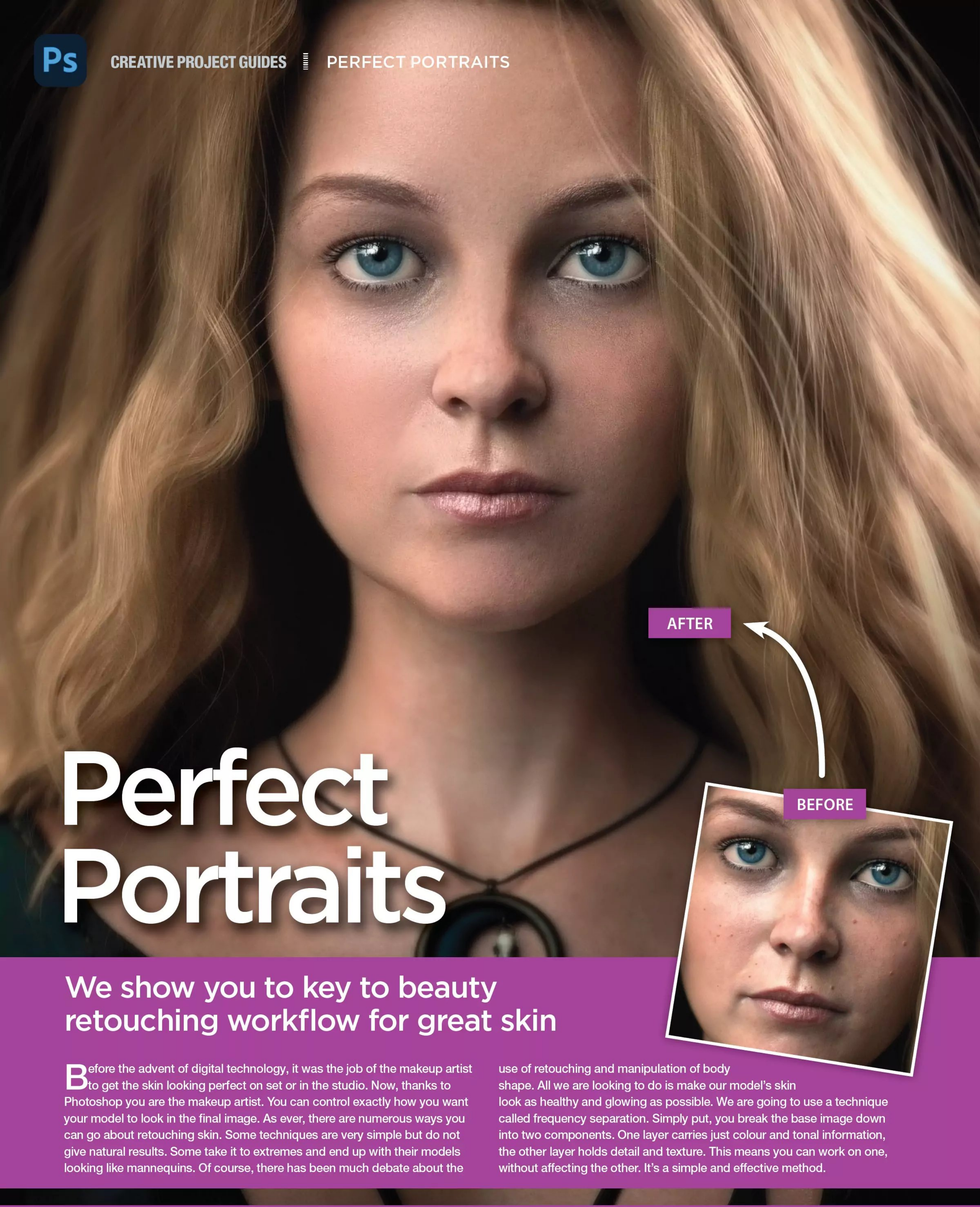


22 Once complete, it's just a case of clicking the Done button and returning to Adobe Bridge. The newly created HDR panorama will be visible and ready to be opened in Photoshop for any further image editing, or opened in Camera Raw again and saved as a jpeg or other image format.



This is how you see the bigger picture

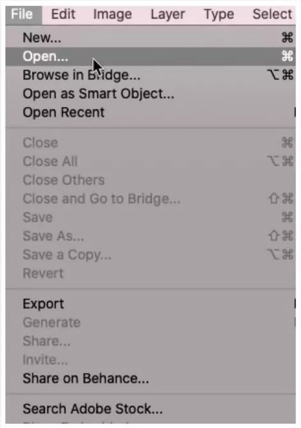
Let Photoshop and Camera Raw transform your photos.

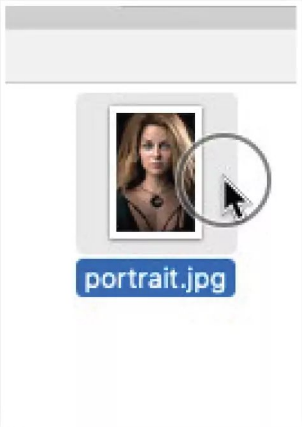


Perfect Portraits

We show you to key to beauty retouching workflow for great skin

Before the advent of digital technology, it was the job of the makeup artist to get the skin looking perfect on set or in the studio. Now, thanks to Photoshop you are the makeup artist. You can control exactly how you want your model to look in the final image. As ever, there are numerous ways you can go about retouching skin. Some techniques are very simple but do not give natural results. Some take it to extremes and end up with their models looking like mannequins. Of course, there has been much debate about the use of retouching and manipulation of body shape. All we are looking to do is make our model's skin look as healthy and glowing as possible. We are going to use a technique called frequency separation. Simply put, you break the base image down into two components. One layer carries just colour and tonal information, the other layer holds detail and texture. This means you can work on one, without affecting the other. It's a simple and effective method.


File Edit Image Layer Type Select
New... ⌘
Open... ⌘
Browse in Bridge... ⌥⌘
Open as Smart Object...
Open Recent
Close ⌘
Close All ⌥⌘
Close Others
Close and Go to Bridge... ⇧⌘
Save ⌘
Save As... ⇧⌘
Save a Copy... ⌥⌘
Revert
Export
Generate
Share...
Invite...
Share on Behance...
Search Adobe Stock...


portrait.jpg

01 Let's begin by firing up Photoshop and from the file menu selecting File > Open. Navigate to where your images are stored. Our base image is a jpeg file called 'portrait'. If you double-click your image or click the Open button, the image will open in Photoshop as a new document.

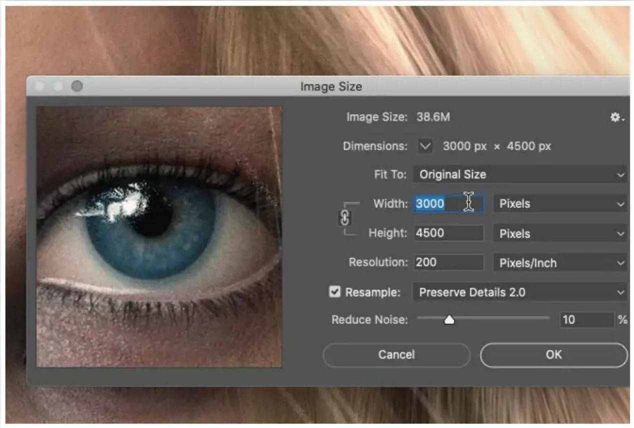
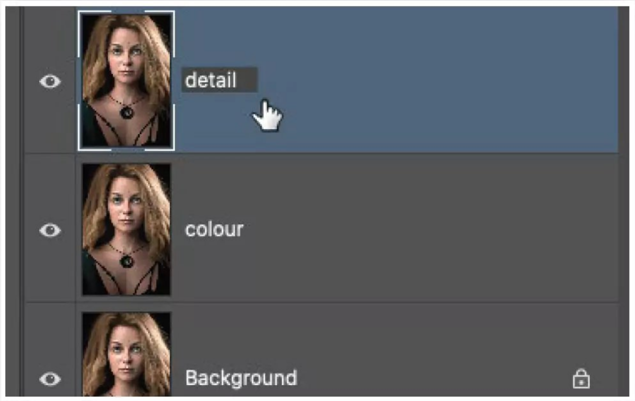


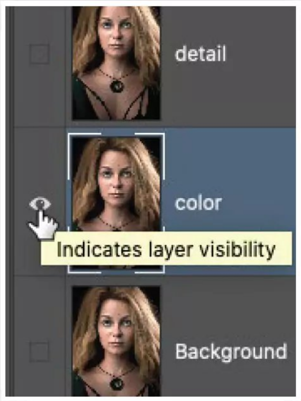
Image Size
Cancel
OK

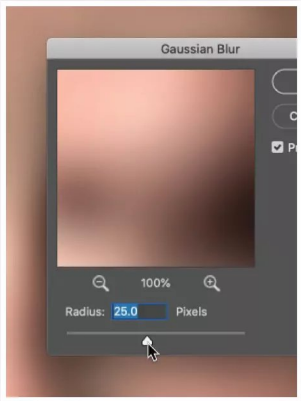
Image Size: 38.6M
Dimensions: 3000 px × 4500 px
Fit To: Original Size
Width: 3000 Pixels
Height: 4500 Pixels
Resolution: 200 Pixels/Inch
☑ Resample: Preserve Details 2.0
Reduce Noise: 10 %

02 For your reference, the image is 3000 pixels wide x 4500 pixels high. Throughout our tutorial we will be using settings and brushes appropriate to an image of this size. If you are using images of different sizes, your settings and brushes may need to scale to match your image dimensions.


detail
colour
Background

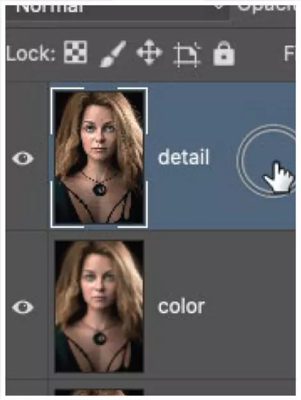
03 Now we need to separate this image into its component elements for this process to work properly. If you go to Layer > Duplicate Layer, or hit Cmd + J on your keyboard, you can create a duplicate of the base image. Name this new layer 'colour'. Then create a second duplicate called 'detail'.


detail
color
Indicates layer visibility
Background


Gaussian Blur
100%

Radius: 25.0 Pixels

04 For the moment, turn off the visibility of the 'detail' and 'Background' layers, leaving the 'color' layer visible. Go to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur and choose a Radius value that is just enough to blur out any sharp details. A value of 25 pixels was just enough for this image.


Normal
Lock:
detail
color

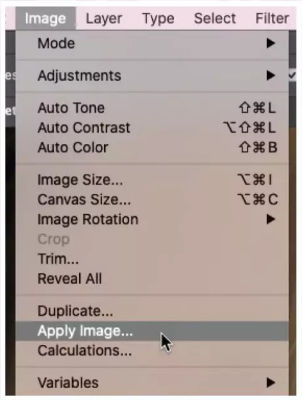
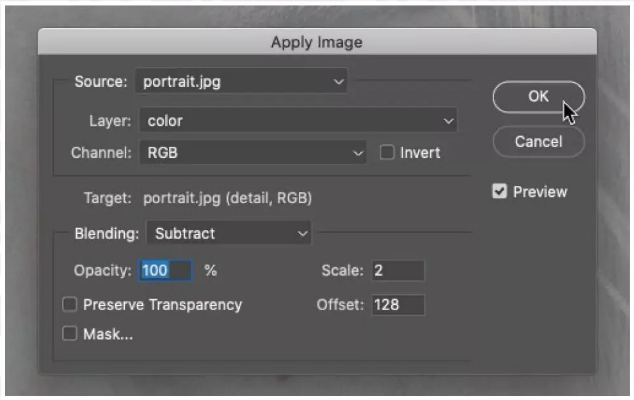


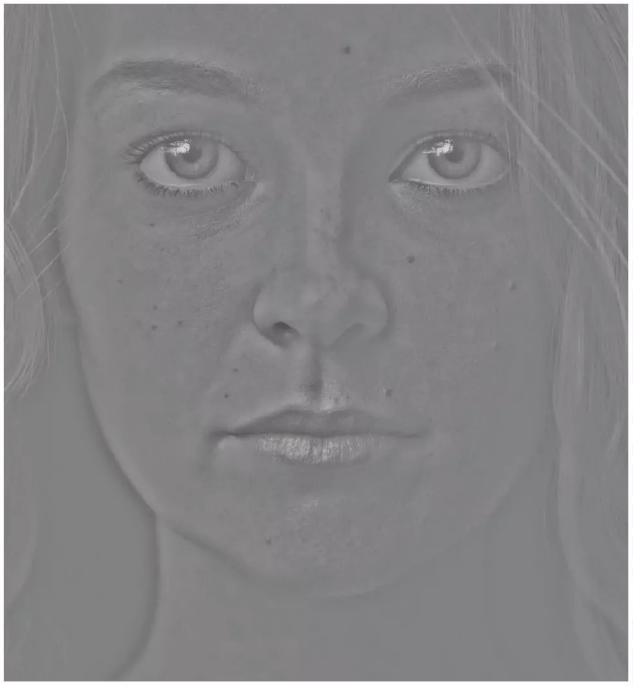
Image Layer Type Select Filter
Mode
Adjustments
Auto Tone ⇧⌘L
Auto Contrast ⌥⇧⌘L
Auto Color ⇧⌘B
Image Size... ⌥⌘I
Canvas Size... ⌥⌘C
Image Rotation
Crop
Trim...
Reveal All
Duplicate...
Apply Image...
Calculations...
Variables

05 Next, make the 'detail' layer visible again by clicking the eyeball button next to the thumbnail make sure it is the active layer. Go to Image > Apply Image to open up the Apply Image window. This lets you blend two images together for a range of effects.

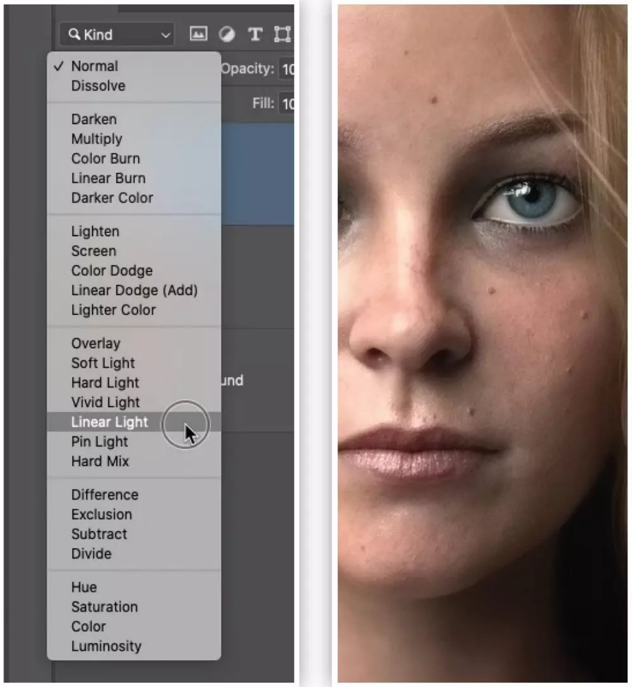

Apply Image
OK
Cancel
☑ Preview

Source: portrait.jpg
Layer: color
Channel: RGB ☐ Invert
Target: portrait.jpg (detail, RGB)
Blending: Subtract
Opacity: 100 %
Scale: 2
☐ Preserve Transparency
Offset: 128
☐ Mask...

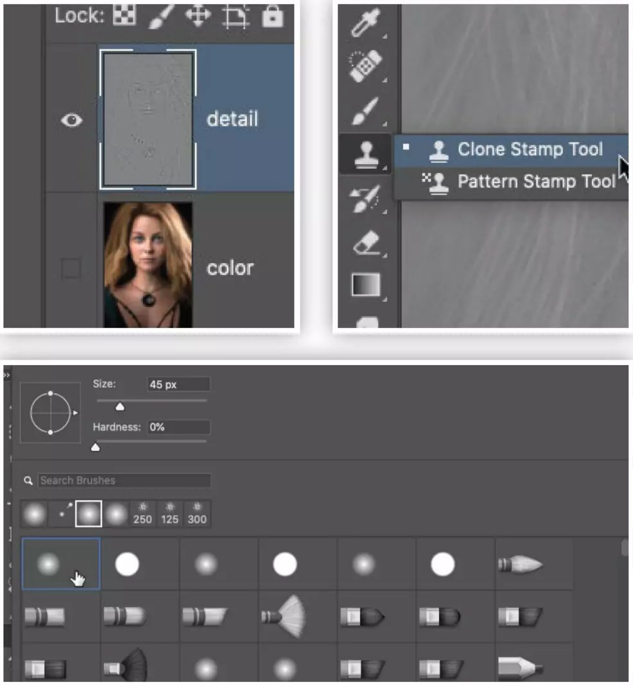
06 Under Layer: select color and under Blending: choose the Subtract option. This means the 'detail' layer and the 'colour' layer are blending to create a desaturated image. Make sure Scale: is 2 and Offset: is 128 for optimum results. Click OK to continue to the next step.



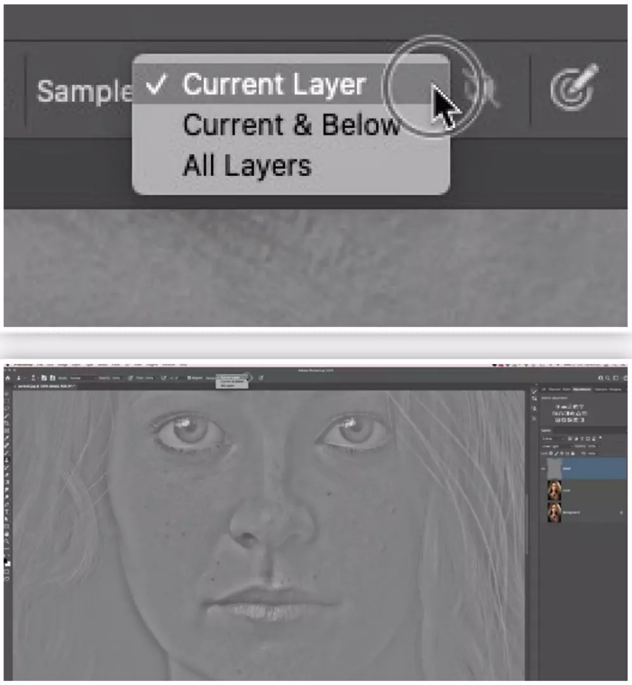
07 The 'detail' layer has now changed after its blended integration with the 'colour' layer below it. To remove all vestiges of colour, go to Image > Adjustments > Desaturate (Shift + Cmd + U). The image will now look like a greyscale image. This is where all the detail will be kept in this process.


Kind
Opacity: 10
Fill: 10
✓ Normal
Dissolve
Darken
Multiply
Color Burn
Linear Burn
Darker Color
Lighten
Screen
Color Dodge
Linear Dodge (Add)
Lighter Color
Overlay
Soft Light
Hard Light
Vivid Light
Linear Light
Pin Light
Hard Mix
Difference
Exclusion
Subtract
Divide
Hue
Saturation
Color
Luminosity

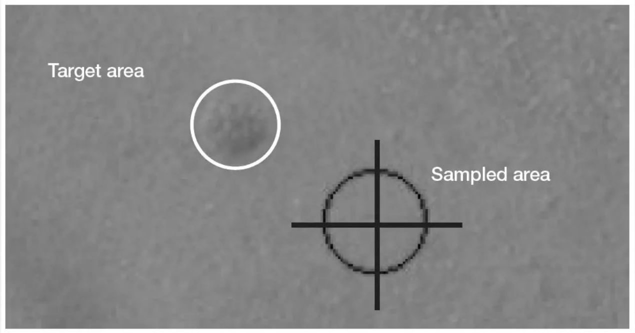
08 Next, click on the Blend Mode panel and choose Linear Light from the dropdown list. In combination, the 'detail' layer blending into the blurred 'colour' layer below now looks like the original image except it now requires those two layers to achieve it.

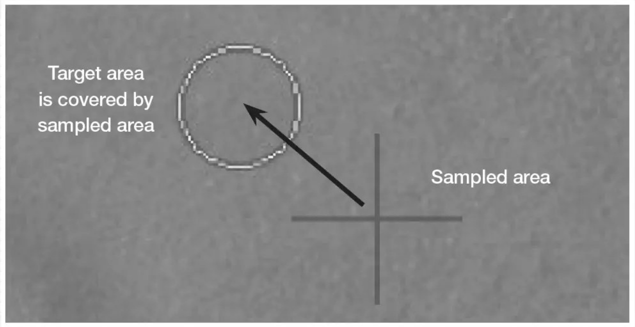

Lock:
detail
color
Clone Stamp Tool
Pattern Stamp Tool
Size: 45 px
Hardness: 0%
Search Brushes
250
125
300

09 For the next step, make sure the 'detail' layer is the only visible layer and that it is currently active. Go to the toolbar and select the Clone Stamp Tool (S). Up in the Tool Options panel, click the Brush Presets button and select a brush of about 45 pixels and Hardness 0%.

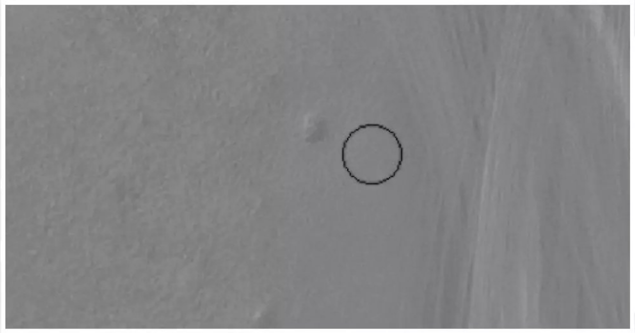

Sample:
✓ Current Layer
Current & Below
All Layers

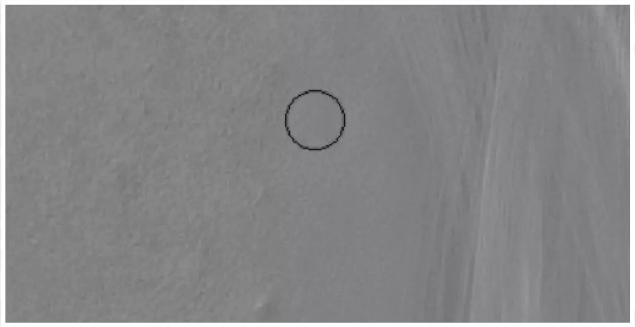
10 This is critical: make sure the Sample: panel is set to Current Layer. You do not want what you are about to do next be influenced by any other layers. We are going to use the Clone Stamp Tool to copy and paste areas of clean, unblemished, skin onto areas we want to look just as clean.



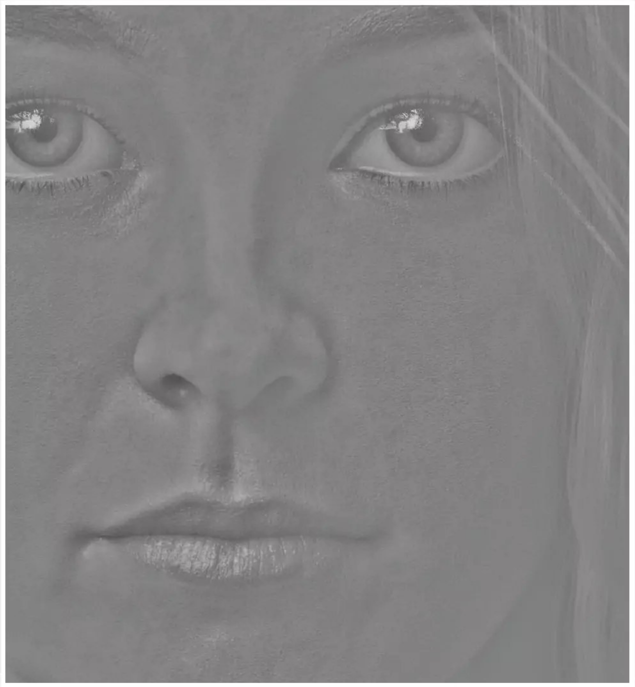

Target area is covered by sampled area
Sampled area

11 Pick your first blemish. Find an area of clean skin next to it and place your cursor over it. Press the Alt key and left-click that clean area. You have just sampled an area of clean skin. Move your cursor over the target blemish and left-click to paste the clean sampled area over the top.

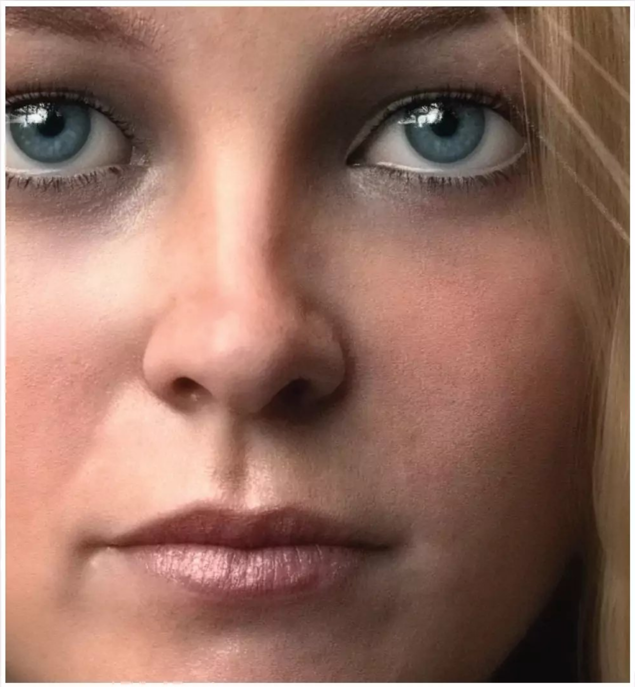




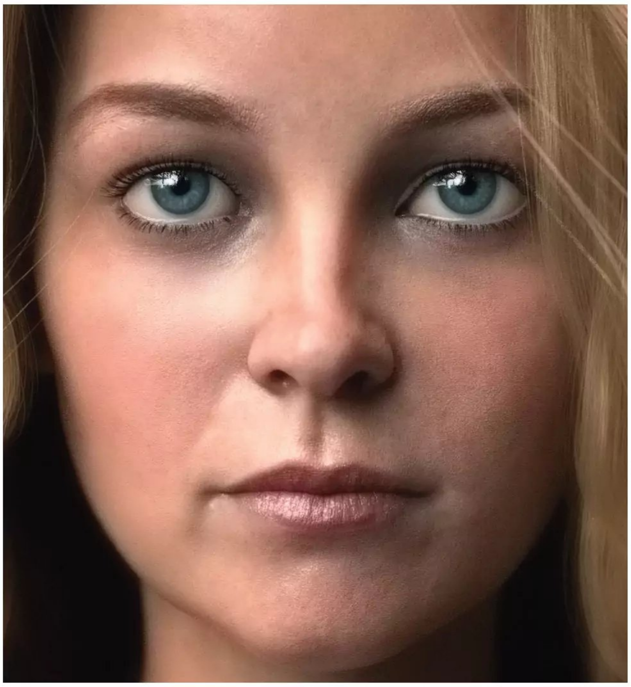
12 This is the basis of clone stamping. Now you can select clean areas next to each blemish and paste them over the top of each target spot to remove them. When cloning, take care not to overdo it, and watch out for tell-tale repeating patterns that signal incorrect use of the clone stamp tool.



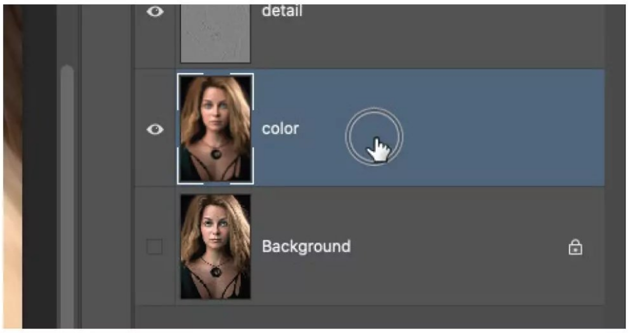
13 Because you are cloning skin on top of skin, this technique avoids problems that result in loss of detail or noticeable blurring of areas that have been retouched. With a little patience and care, your subject's skin should look noticeably fresh and clean, ready for the next step.

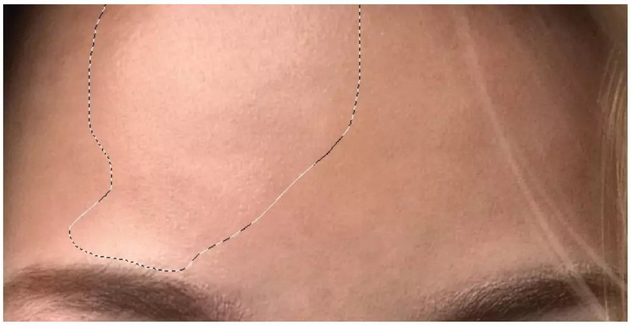


14 Click on the eyeball icon on the 'colour' layer to make it visible again and you should now be able to view the fruits of your labours. The cleaned up 'detail' layer is blended back into the 'colour' layer below and the result is that you now have a subject with perfect skin.

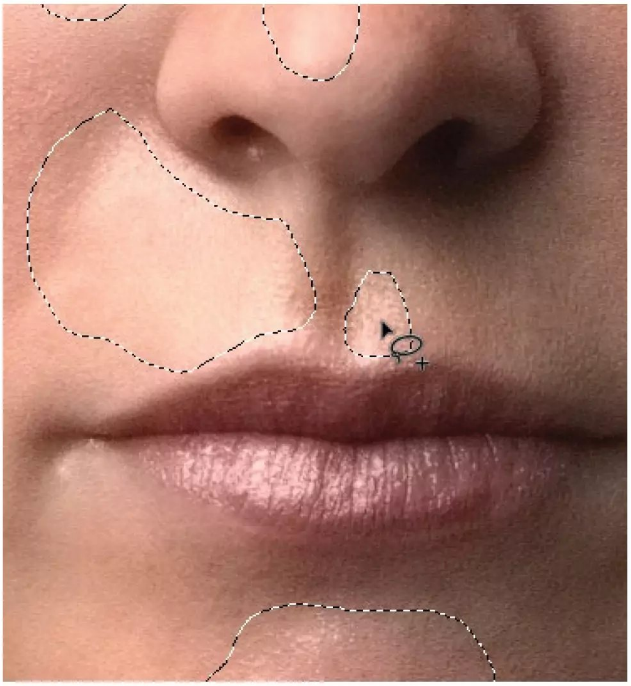


15 At this point you could sit back and conclude that your work is done, but there is another trick you can employ to enhance this portrait image still further. You may notice that the subject's skin has shiny hotspots on it. With a little attention, this can be removed quite easily.


detail
color
Background



16 Make sure the 'colour' layer is active and then go to the toolbar and select the Lasso Tool (L). Use this tool to drag a selection around the shiny area of the forehead. If you need to add more areas to this selection, go to the Tool Options bar and click the Add to Selection button.



17 Your Lasso Tool cursor will have a small plus symbol (+) next to it to indicates that you can add additional selections to the ones you already have. We worked our way around the face, picking out areas that looked little shiny and were in need of attention.

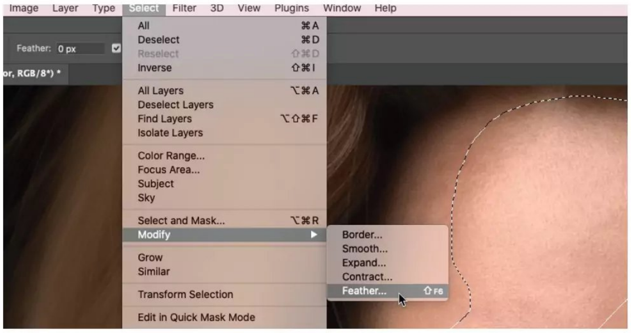
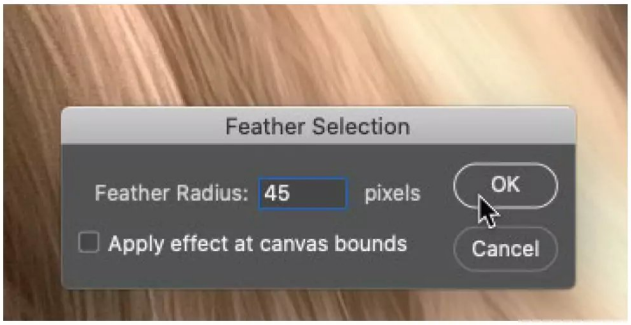


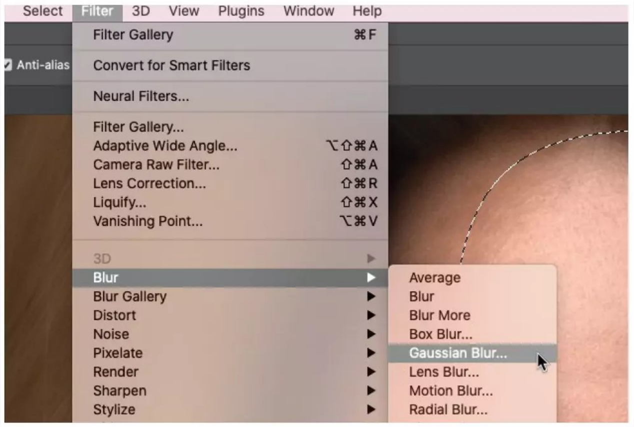
Image Layer Type Select Filter 3D View Plugins Window Help
Feather: 0 px
or, RGB/8*) *
All ⌘A
Deselect ⌘D
Reselect ⇧⌘D
Inverse ⇧⌘I
All Layers ⌥⌘A
Deselect Layers
Find Layers ⌥⇧⌘F
Isolate Layers
Color Range...
Focus Area...
Subject
Sky
Select and Mask... ⌥⌘R
Modify
Grow
Similar
Transform Selection
Edit in Quick Mask Mode
Border...
Smooth...
Expand...
Contract...
Feather... ⇧F6

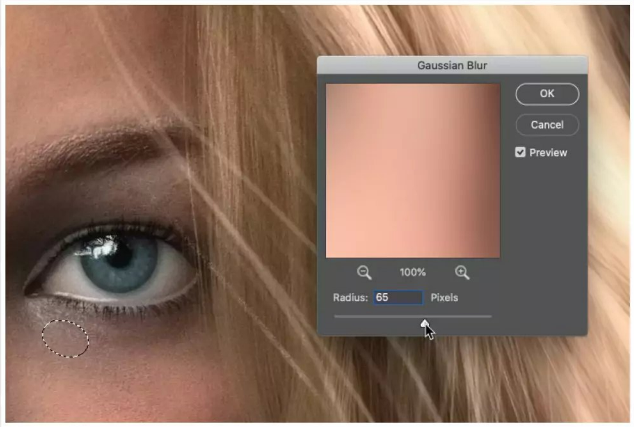

Feather Selection
OK
Cancel

Feather Radius: 45 pixels

☐ Apply effect at canvas bounds

18 When you have all the areas that require some attention selected, go to Select > Modify > Feather (Shift + F6). This panel lets you feather the edge of the selections you've made. For the size image we're working with, a radius of 45 should work just great. Click OK to continue.

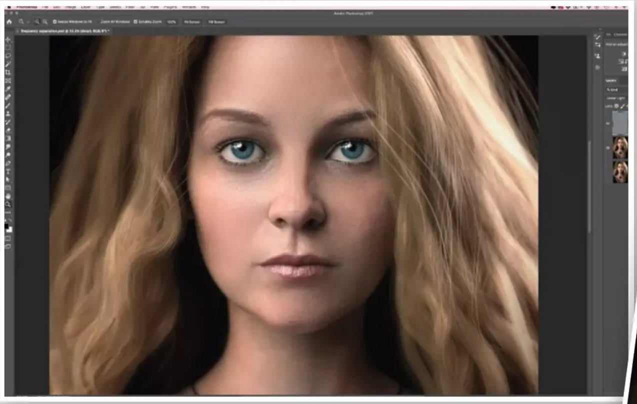

Select
Filter
3D
View
Plugins
Window
Help
Anti-alias
Filter Gallery ⌘F
Convert for Smart Filters
Neural Filters...
Filter Gallery...
Adaptive Wide Angle... ⌥⇧⌘A
Camera Raw Filter... ⇧⌘A
Lens Correction... ⇧⌘R
Liquify... ⇧⌘X
Vanishing Point... ⌥⌘V
3D
Blur
Blur Gallery
Distort
Noise
Pixelate
Render
Sharpen
Stylize
Average
Blur
Blur More
Box Blur...
Gaussian Blur...
Lens Blur...
Motion Blur...
Radial Blur...


Gaussian Blur
OK
Cancel
☑ Preview
100%

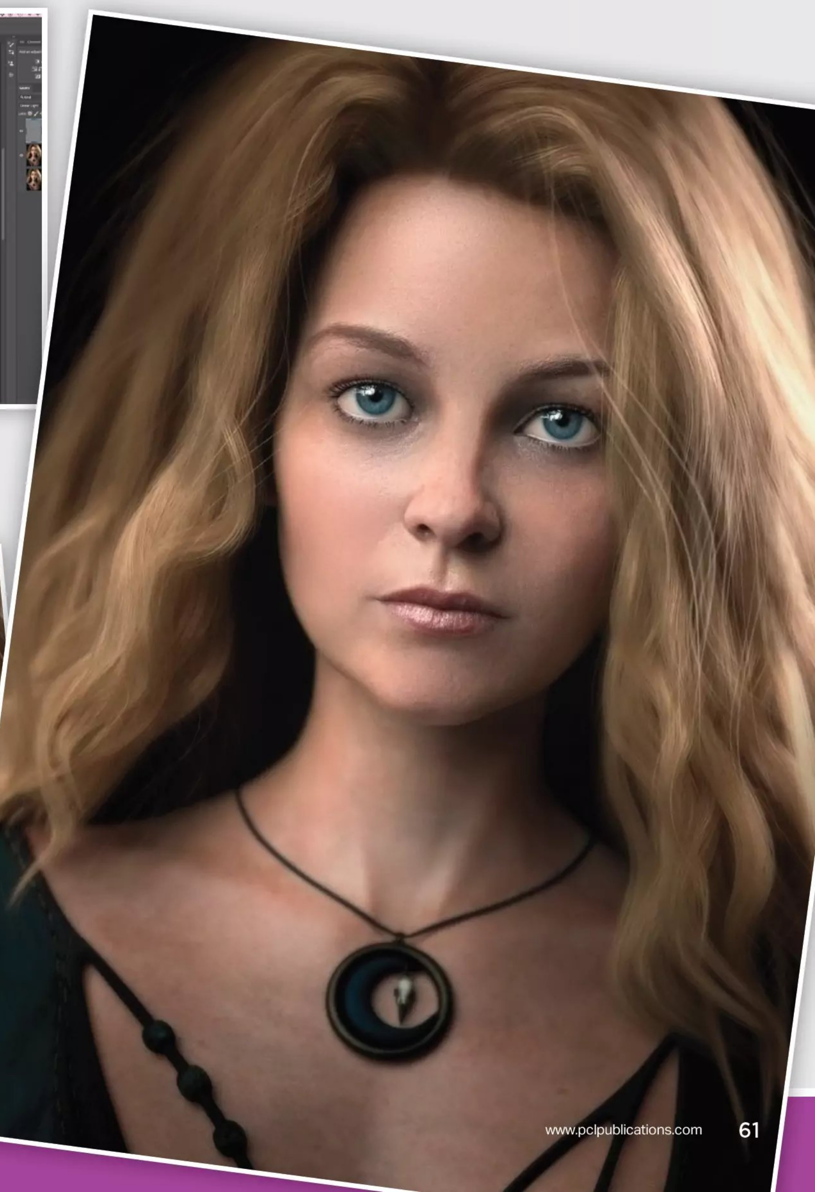
Radius: 65 Pixels

19 The selections will be softened ready for the next step. Go to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur to bring up a blur panel. Remember that you are working on the 'colour' layer that is already blurred, but you can blur these specific areas even more.

20 In the Gaussian Blur panel, choose a Radius value that blurs those areas of skin even more and is just enough to reduce the amount of shine on the subject's skin. IF you overdo it, it will look very obviously blurred. In this case, a value of 65 pixels was enough to soften the shiny skin areas.

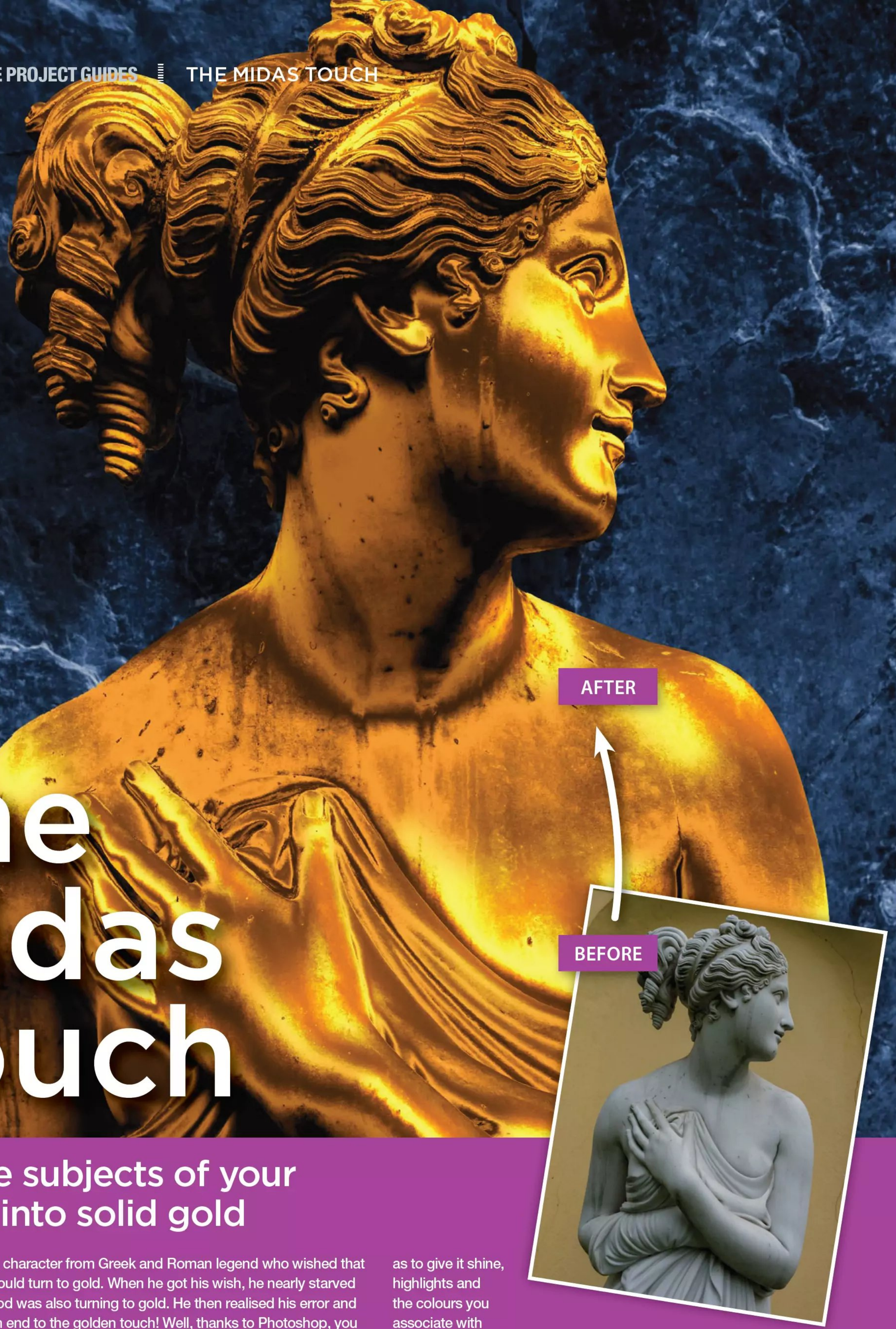


21 Now you can sit back and take in the work you've done to this portrait. The skin now looks like it has had the attention of a good makeup artist. The blemishes are gone, but the skin still looks like skin with pores, details and not like a smooth shop dummy.



Create a flawless complexion

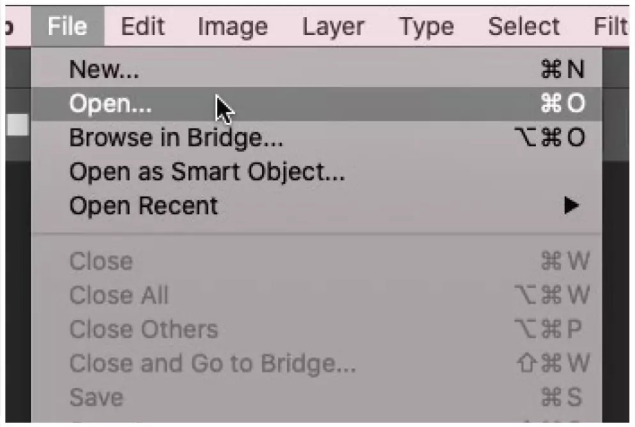
Now you have the key to perfect skin.



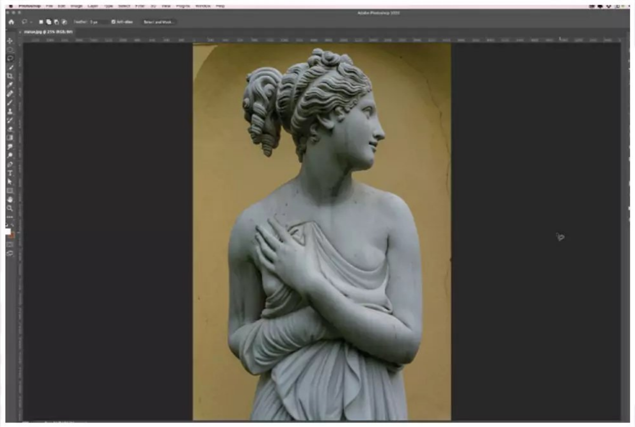
The Midas Touch

Turn the subjects of your photos into solid gold

King Midas was a character from Greek and Roman legend who wished that all he touched could turn to gold. When he got his wish, he nearly starved to death since his food was also turning to gold. He then realised his error and quickly wished for an end to the golden touch! Well, thanks to Photoshop, you can turn things into gold and not worry about your next meal being inedible. Using some fairly simple techniques, you can turn many subjects in your photos into golden objects that have that beautiful lustre that only comes from solid gold. We will take a photograph and manipulate it in such as way as to give it shine, highlights and the colours you associate with this precious metal. A couple of layers, a few adjustments, perhaps a new background of your choice and you will be celebrating your own power of the Midas Touch.


File
Edit
Image
Layer
Type
Select
Filt
New... ⌘N
Open... ⌘O
Browse in Bridge... ⌥⌘O
Open as Smart Object...
Open Recent
Close ⌘W
Close All ⌥⌘W
Close Others ⌥⌘P
Close and Go to Bridge... ⇧⌘W
Save ⌘S

01 Let's begin by opening Photoshop and going to File > Open, or pressing Cmd + O to open a new image. Our chosen example is of a simple marble statue that we are going to turn into gold. Double-click the image or press Open to bring it into Photoshop as a new document.



02 The image has a plain background which actually is helpful to us since it creates a nice clean edge between the statue and her background. Selecting the statue will be much easier because of this. It's worth taking this into account when choosing your own subjects for this effect.

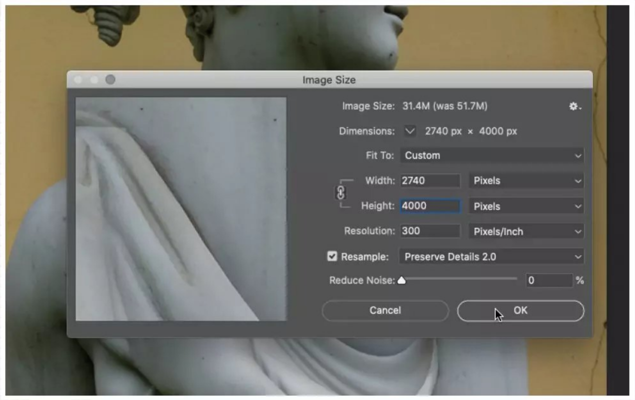
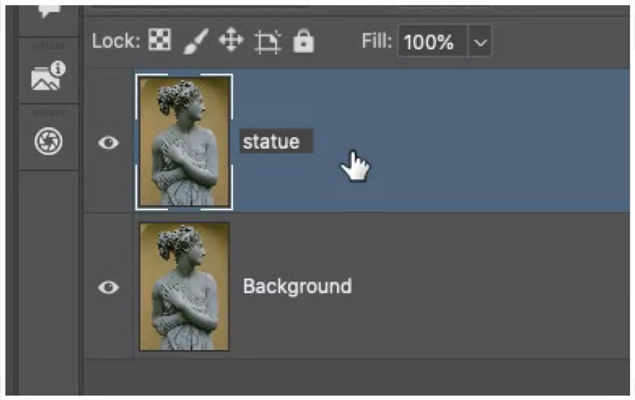


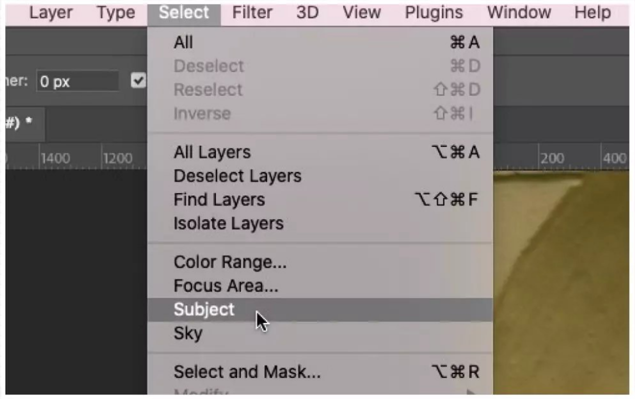
Image Size

Image Size: 31.4M (was 51.7M)
Dimensions: 2740 px × 4000 px
Fit To: Custom
Width: 2740 Pixels
Height: 4000 Pixels
Resolution: 300 Pixels/Inch
☑ Resample: Preserve Details 2.0
Reduce Noise: 0 %

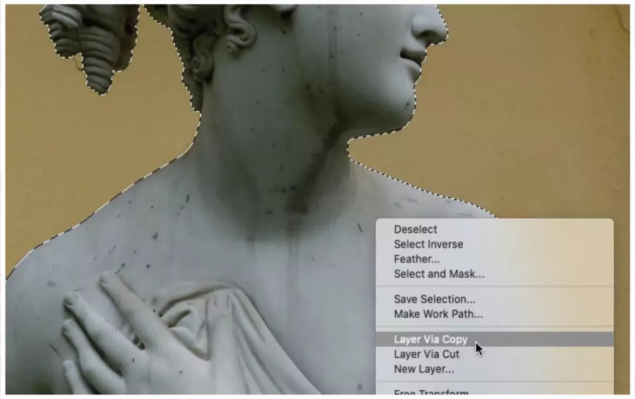
03 The image we are using is 2740 pixels wide by 4000 pixels high. Any brush sizes and adjustment values added are based on an image of this size. If you are working on a project of a different size, bear this in mind as you may have to alter values to accommodate the different dimensions.


Lock:
Fill: 100%
statue
Background

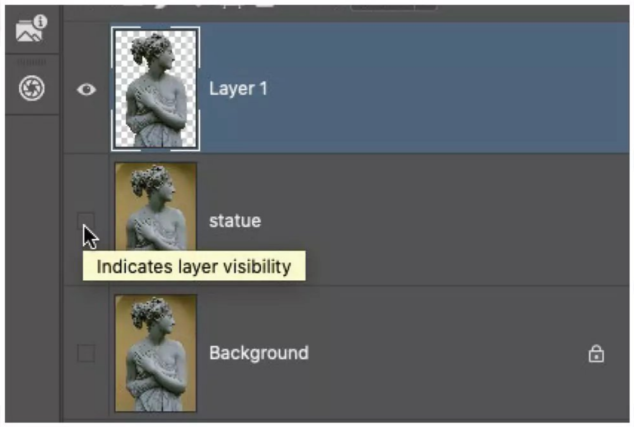
04 It's always a good idea to start a project by creating a duplicate of your base image. This means that if all easel fails, you still have your original which will remain untouched and unaffected. Simply press Cmd + J to create a duplicate layer. We named our new layer 'statue'.


Layer
Type
Select
Filter
3D
View
Plugins
Window
Help
All ⌘A
Deselect ⌘D
Reselect ⇧⌘D
Inverse ⇧⌘I
All Layers ⌥⌘A
Deselect Layers
Find Layers ⌥⇧⌘F
Isolate Layers
Color Range...
Focus Area...
Subject
Sky
Select and Mask... ⌥⌘R
ner: 0 px
1400
1200
200
400

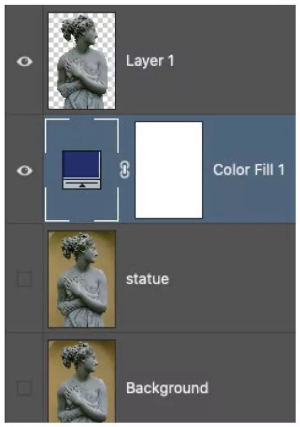
05 Next we're going to remove the statue from her background. As we mentioned, since the statue has a nice clean edge which is easily visible against the background, you can go to Select > Subject and let Photoshop do all the hard work for you and make a selection of the statue.

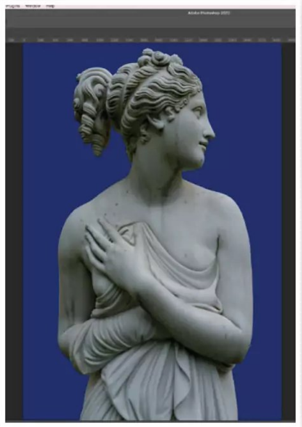

Deselect
Select Inverse
Feather...
Select and Mask...
Save Selection...
Make Work Path...
Layer Via Copy
Layer Via Cut
New Layer...
Free Transform

06 You'll see the black and white dotted lines of the selection appear (marching ants) and you can right-click inside the selection and choose Layer Via Copy from the context menu that appears. This will select all pixels within the active selection and copy them to a new layer.

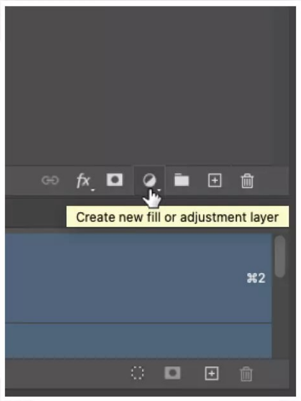

Layer 1
statue
Indicates layer visibility
Background

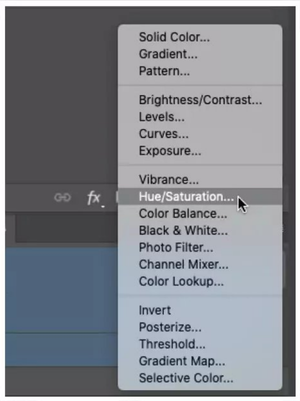
07 The cut out of the statue will appear on a new layer called 'Layer 1'. You can rename it if you like. Layer 1 is what we will work with to create our gold effect. For the moment, click on the visibility icons of the other layers (the eyeball icon) so they are invisible.


Layer 1
Color Fill 1
statue
Background

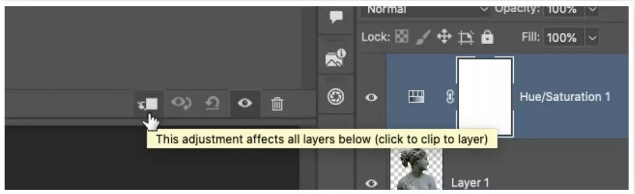


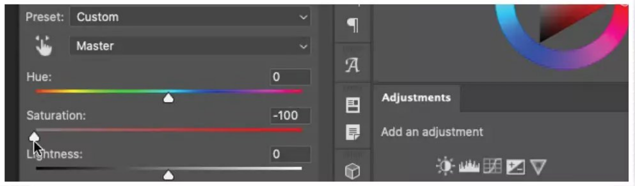
08 For clarity while working on the cut out, we went to the layer options panel and clicked Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer and added a Solid Color adjustment Layer. Make sure it is below the 'Layer 1' cut out of the statue. We made the Color Fill a strong blue to help the statue stand out.


fx
Create new fill or adjustment layer
⌘2


Solid Color...
Gradient...
Pattern...
Brightness/Contrast...
Levels...
Curves...
Exposure...
Vibrance...
Hue/Saturation...
Color Balance...
Black & White...
Photo Filter...
Channel Mixer...
Color Lookup...
Invert
Posterize...
Threshold...
Gradient Map...
Selective Color...

09 Make sure 'Layer 1' is selected and go back to the layer options panel and click Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer again. Choose Hue/ Saturation. A new layer called Hue/Saturation 1 will be added above the statue cut out. We want to make a very simple change to the statue.


Normal
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
Hue/Saturation 1
This adjustment affects all layers below (click to clip to layer)
Layer 1


Preset: Custom

Master

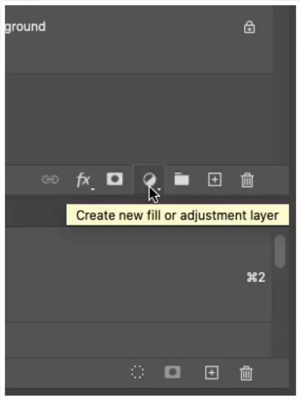
Hue: 0

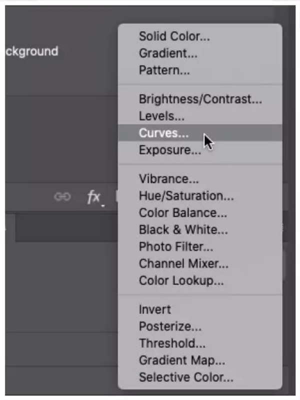
Saturation: -100

Lightness: 0

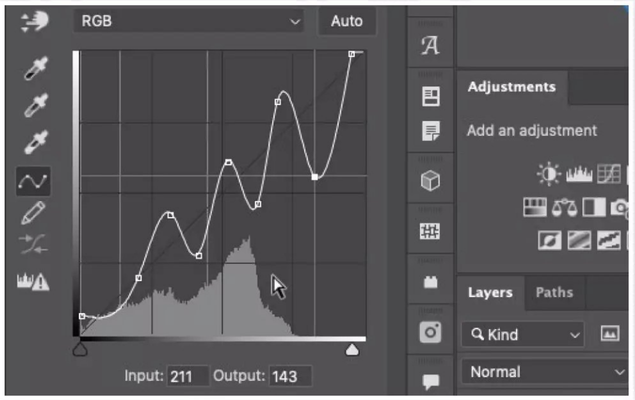
Adjustments
Add an adjustment

10 In the properties panel for the Hue/Saturation 1 layer, click on the Clip To Layer button. This will ensure that any adjustments will only affect whatever is directly beneath this layer in the stack. Push the Saturation slider fully to the left to completely desaturate the statue.


ground
fx
Create new fill or adjustment layer
⌘2


ckground
Solid Color...
Gradient...
Pattern...
Brightness/Contrast...
Levels...
Curves...
Exposure...
Vibrance...
Hue/Saturation...
Color Balance...
Black & White...
Photo Filter...
Channel Mixer...
Color Lookup...
Invert
Posterize...
Threshold...
Gradient Map...
Selective Color...

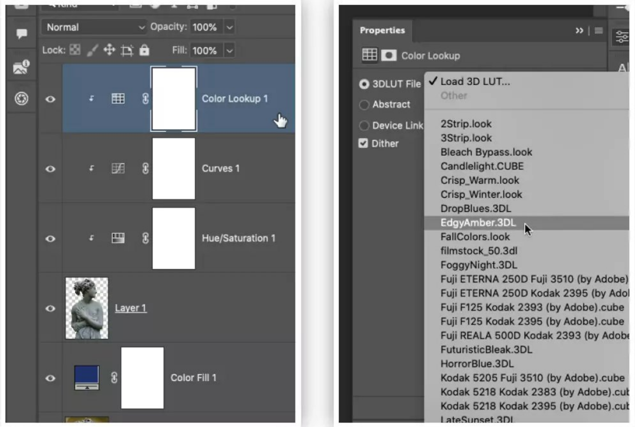
11 Next, we need to begin to apply a shine and lustre to the statue that mimics the look of metal. There are various ways to do this with multiple layers, but there is also a nice quick method. Go to the layer options panel, click Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer and choose Curves.


RGB

Input: 211 Output: 143

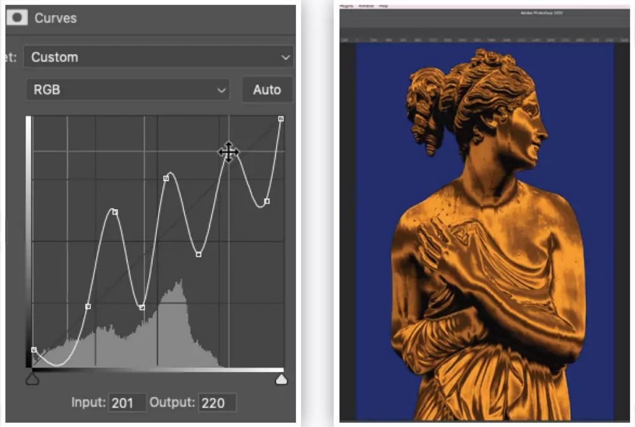
Auto
Adjustments
Add an adjustment
Layers
Paths
Kind
Normal

12 Make sure Curves 1 is clipped like the Hue/Saturation layer so it only affects the cut out image below. Then click the curve to add points which you can drag to create a sawtooth set of curves like the example shown. This adjustment should create a chrome effect on your image.


Normal
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
Color Lookup 1
Curves 1
Hue/Saturation 1
Layer 1
Color Fill 1
Properties
Color Lookup
3DLUT File
Abstract
Device Link
Dither
✓ Load 3D LUT...
Other
2Strip.look
3Strip.look
Bleach Bypass.look
Candlelight.CUBE
Crisp_Warm.look
Crisp_Winter.look
DropBlues.3DL
EdgyAmber.3DL
FallColors.look
filmstock_50.3dl
FoggyNight.3DL
Fuji ETERNA 250D Fuji 3510 (by Adobe)
Fuji ETERNA 250D Kodak 2395 (by Adol
Fuji F125 Kodak 2393 (by Adobe).cube
Fuji F125 Kodak 2395 (by Adobe).cube
Fuji REALA 500D Kodak 2393 (by Adobe
FuturisticBleak.3DL
HorrorBlue.3DL
Kodak 5205 Fuji 3510 (by Adobe).cube
Kodak 5218 Kodak 2383 (by Adobe).cul
Kodak 5218 Kodak 2395 (by Adobe).cul
LateSunset.3DL

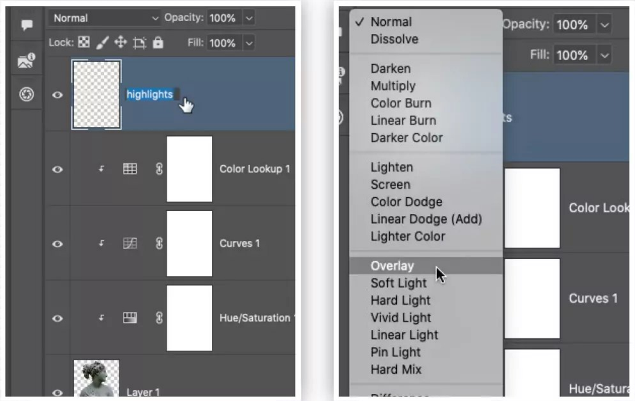
13

Next we need to turn the chrome effect to gold. Click the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer button again and choose Color Lookup and make sure that this adjustment is also clipped to the cut out below it. Now choose the 3DLUT preset EdgyAmber.3DL and watch your image transform.


Curves
Custom
RGB
Auto
Input: 201
Output: 220

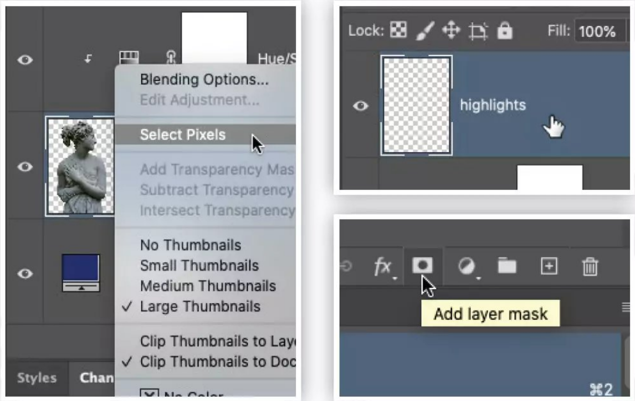
14

The preset colours the cut out to create a very nice facsimile of gold. At this point, you can return to the Curves 1 properties and tweak the settings to get an even nicer gold effect. A little extra contrast seems to really get that gold colour to punch right out at you.


Normal
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
highlights
Color Lookup 1
Curves 1
Hue/Saturation
Layer 1
✓ Normal
Dissolve
Darken
Multiply
Color Burn
Linear Burn
Darker Color
Lighten
Screen
Color Dodge
Linear Dodge (Add)
Lighter Color
Overlay
Soft Light
Hard Light
Vivid Light
Linear Light
Pin Light
Hard Mix

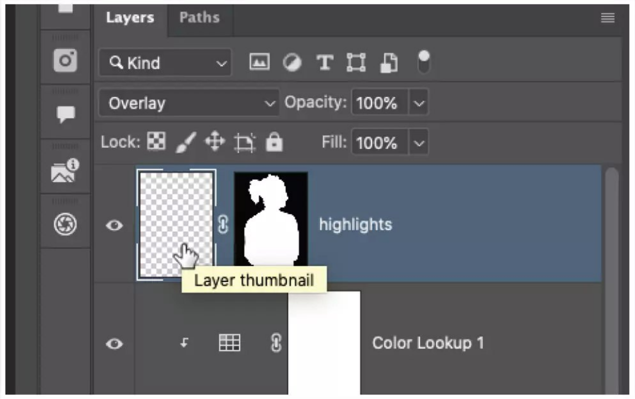
15

Next, add a new layer to the very top of the layer stack and name it 'Highlights'. Go to the Blend Mode options menu and choose Overlay. We want to add some lovely specular highlights that will really make the gold shine, but we need a mask in the shape of the cut out statue.


Blending Options...
Edit Adjustment...
Select Pixels
Add Transparency Mas
Subtract Transparency
Intersect Transparency
No Thumbnails
Small Thumbnails
Medium Thumbnails
✓ Large Thumbnails
Clip Thumbnails to Lay
✓ Clip Thumbnails to Doc
Styles
Chan
Lock:
Fill: 100%
highlights
fx
Add layer mask
⌘2

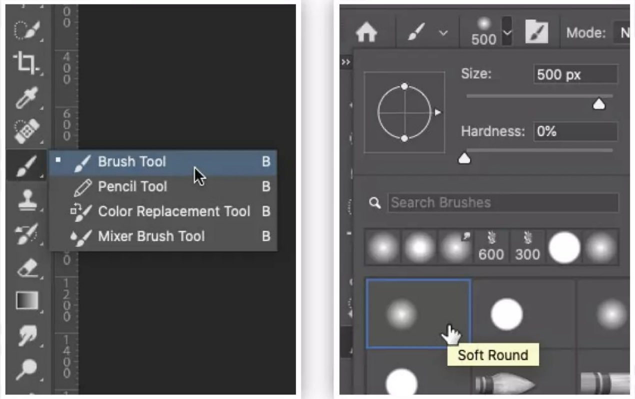
16

Click on Layer 1 which contains the cut out statue and right-click it and choose Select Pixels from the menu. This creates a selection in the outline of the statue. Click back on the Highlights layer to make it active and click Add Layer Mask in the Layer Options panel.


Layers
Paths
Kind
Overlay
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
highlights
Layer thumbnail
Color Lookup 1

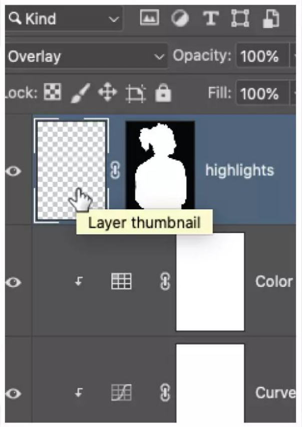
17

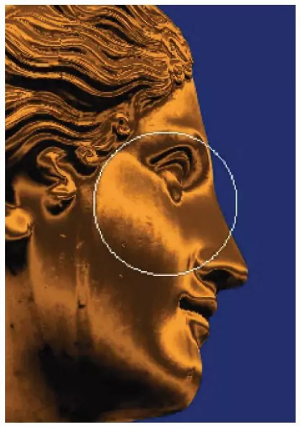
A mask in the shape of the statue is added to the Highlights layer. All this does is let you paint anywhere on the Highlights layer, but brushstrokes will only be visible in the area of the mask that is white. Any other areas in black will conceal pixels on the layer.

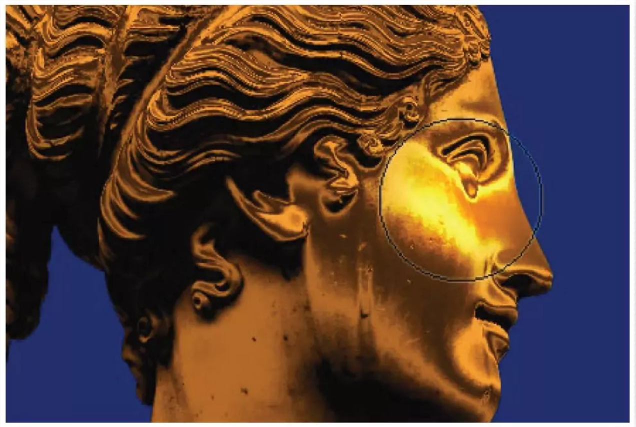

Brush Tool B
Pencil Tool B
Color Replacement Tool B
Mixer Brush Tool B
500
Mode:
Size: 500 px
Hardness: 0%
Search Brushes
600
300
Soft Round

18

Go to the toolbar and select the Brush Tool (B). Choose of soft brush of around 250-500 pixels and make sure the Foreground Colour is set to white. If you press D, you can set the colours to their defaults of black and white and use X to toggle which is the foreground colour.

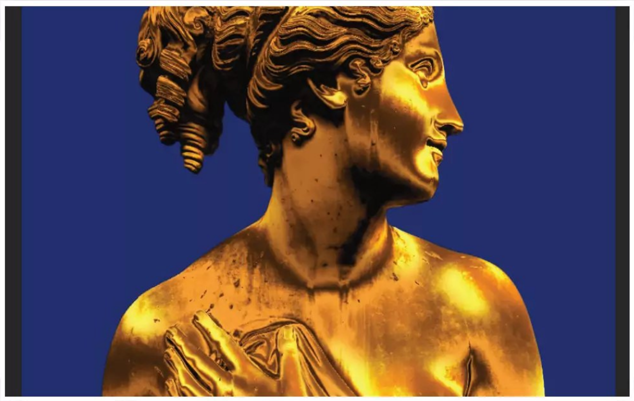

Kind
Overlay
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
highlights
Layer thumbnail
Color
Curve

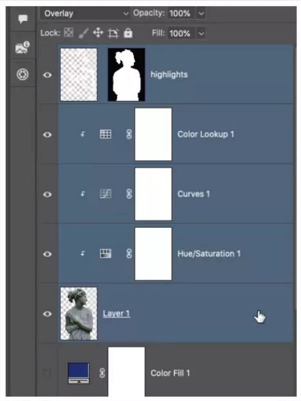


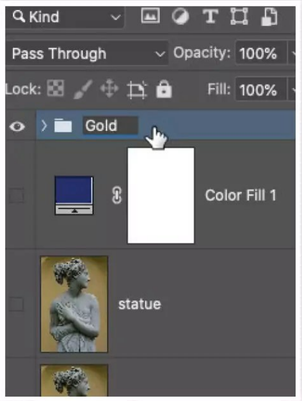


19 Make sure the Highlights layer is active and that you have the layer thumbnail selected and not the mask layer thumbnail. Using the soft white brush you chose, start to dab areas of white in places where you would like to see a nice strong highlight appearing on the statue.

20 Since the Highlight's Blend Mode is set to Overlay, the white brush marks create little hot spots on the gold coloured figure. The pixels are brightened but not simply painted white. This means you can now add brush strokes anywhere on that layer to brighten the gold metal effect below.

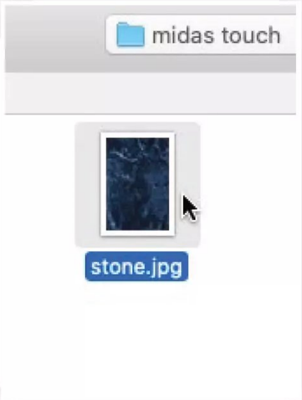


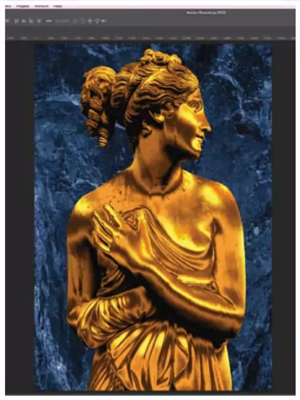

Overlay
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
highlights
Color Lookup 1
Curves 1
Hue/Saturation 1
Layer 1
Color Fill 1

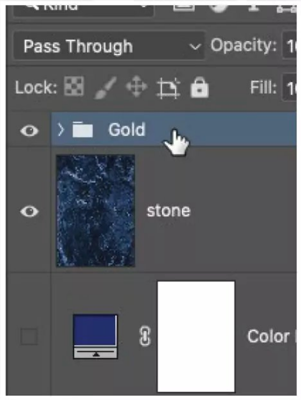

Kind
Pass Through
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
Gold
Color Fill 1
statue

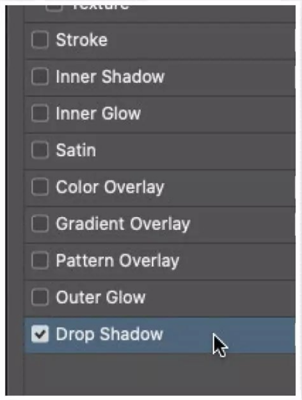
21 We worked our way around the statue, adding bright highlights to all the areas we felt would be reflecting a bright light source. Her face, arms, fingers, hair and dress were all treated to some brush strokes to really start the sell the idea of her being made of solid gold.

22 For the sake of good housekeeping, since the number of layers was starting to increase, we clicked the Highlights layer, held the shift key and clicked on Layer 1 to select them all. While selected, clicking Create New Group, adds them to a new Group folder we named 'Gold'.


midas touch
stone.jpg

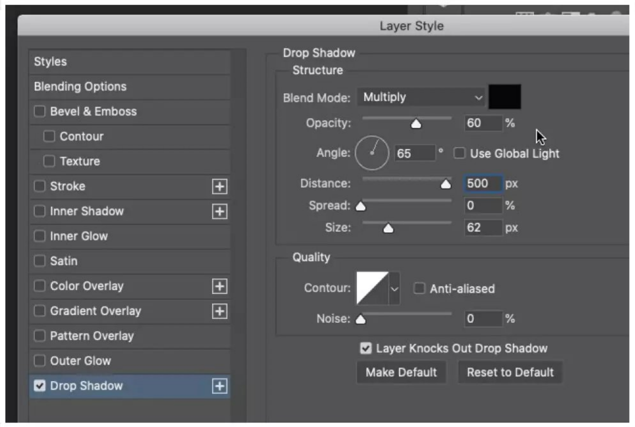



Pass Through
Opacity:
Lock:
Fill:
Gold
stone
Color


☐ Stroke
☐ Inner Shadow
☐ Inner Glow
☐ Satin
☐ Color Overlay
☐ Gradient Overlay
☐ Pattern Overlay
☐ Outer Glow
☑ Drop Shadow

23 We replaced the blue fill background for something a little more visually appealing. We opened a stone image in Photoshop called and then copied and pasted it into the active document we were working on. This new layer was placed directly underneath the Gold group folder.

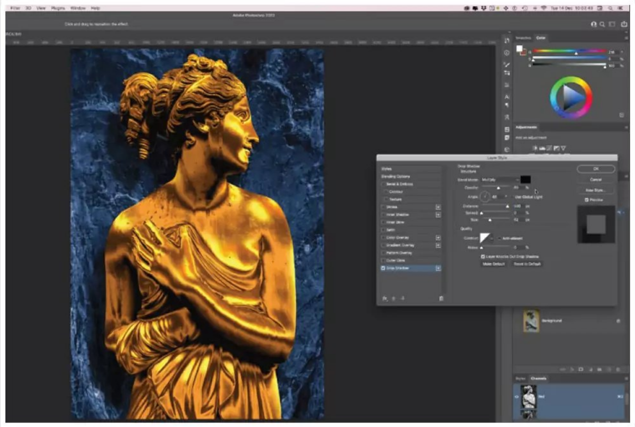
24 One final thing we wanted to add was a hint of a shadow behind the gold statue. Double-click the Gold group folder to open up the Layer Style properties panel. In the Styles list on the left, choose the Drop Shadow option at the bottom. We chose black with a Multiply Blend mode.



Layer Style

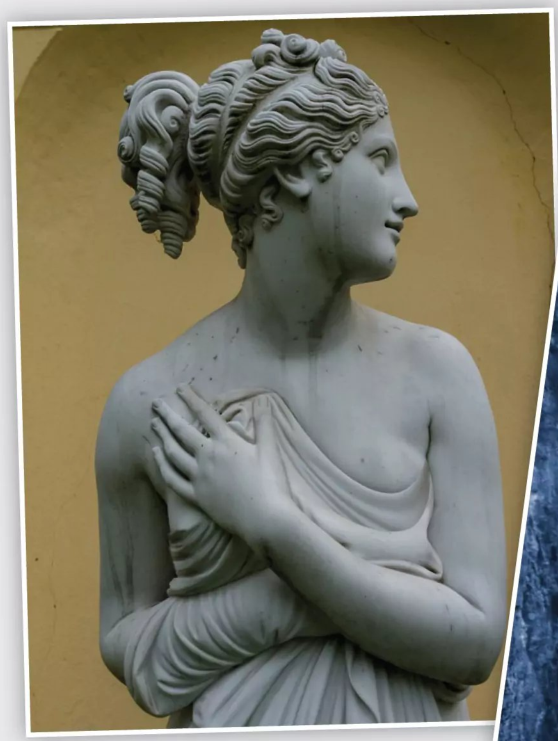
Styles
Blending Options
☐ Bevel & Emboss
☐ Contour
☐ Texture
☐ Stroke
☐ Inner Shadow
☐ Inner Glow
☐ Satin
☐ Color Overlay
☐ Gradient Overlay
☐ Pattern Overlay
☐ Outer Glow
☑ Drop Shadow

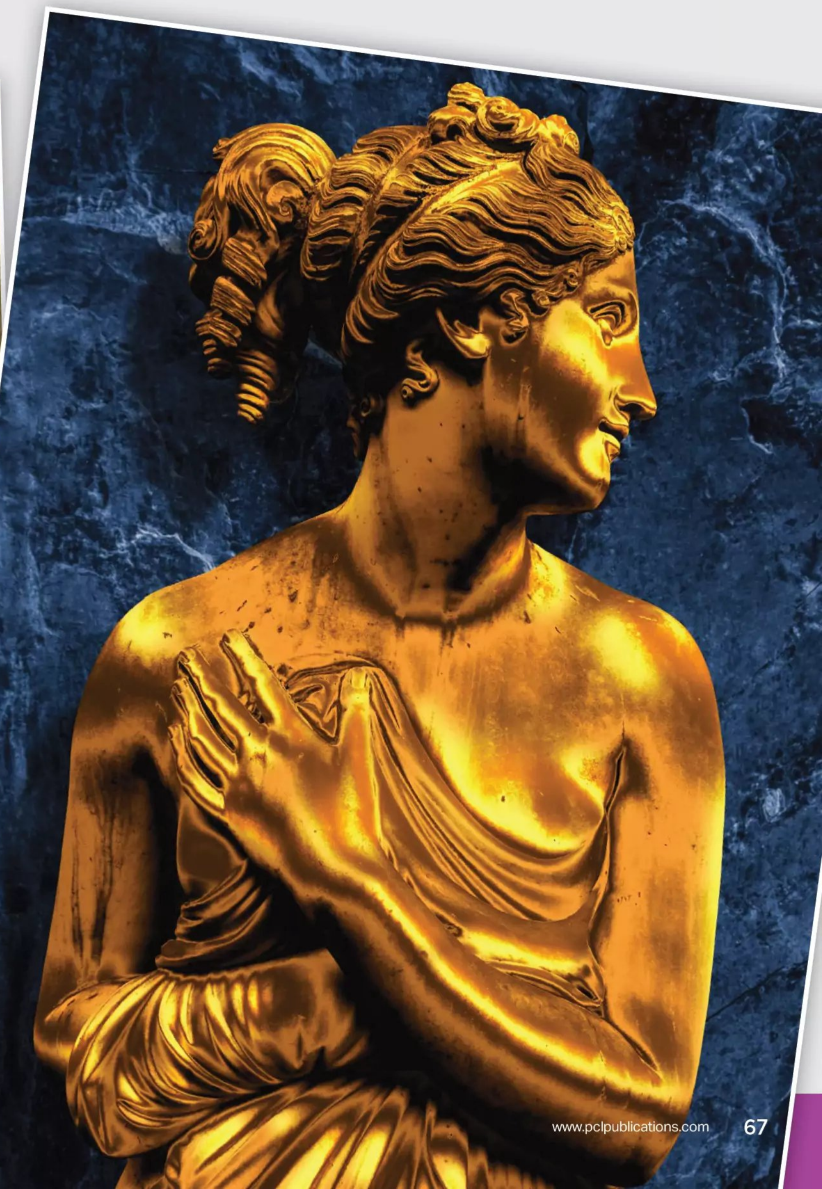
Drop Shadow
Structure
Blend Mode: Multiply
Opacity: 60 %
Angle: 65 ° ☐ Use Global Light
Distance: 500 px
Spread: 0 %
Size: 62 px
Quality
Contour: ☐ Anti-aliased
Noise: 0 %
☑ Layer Knocks Out Drop Shadow
Make Default
Reset to Default



25 The Opacity was set at 60%, Distance was 500px and Size 62px. While this panel is active, you can actually click and drag the shadow around with your cursor if you prefer. We finally settled upon a shadow on the statue's left side as if there was a light source to the right and above.

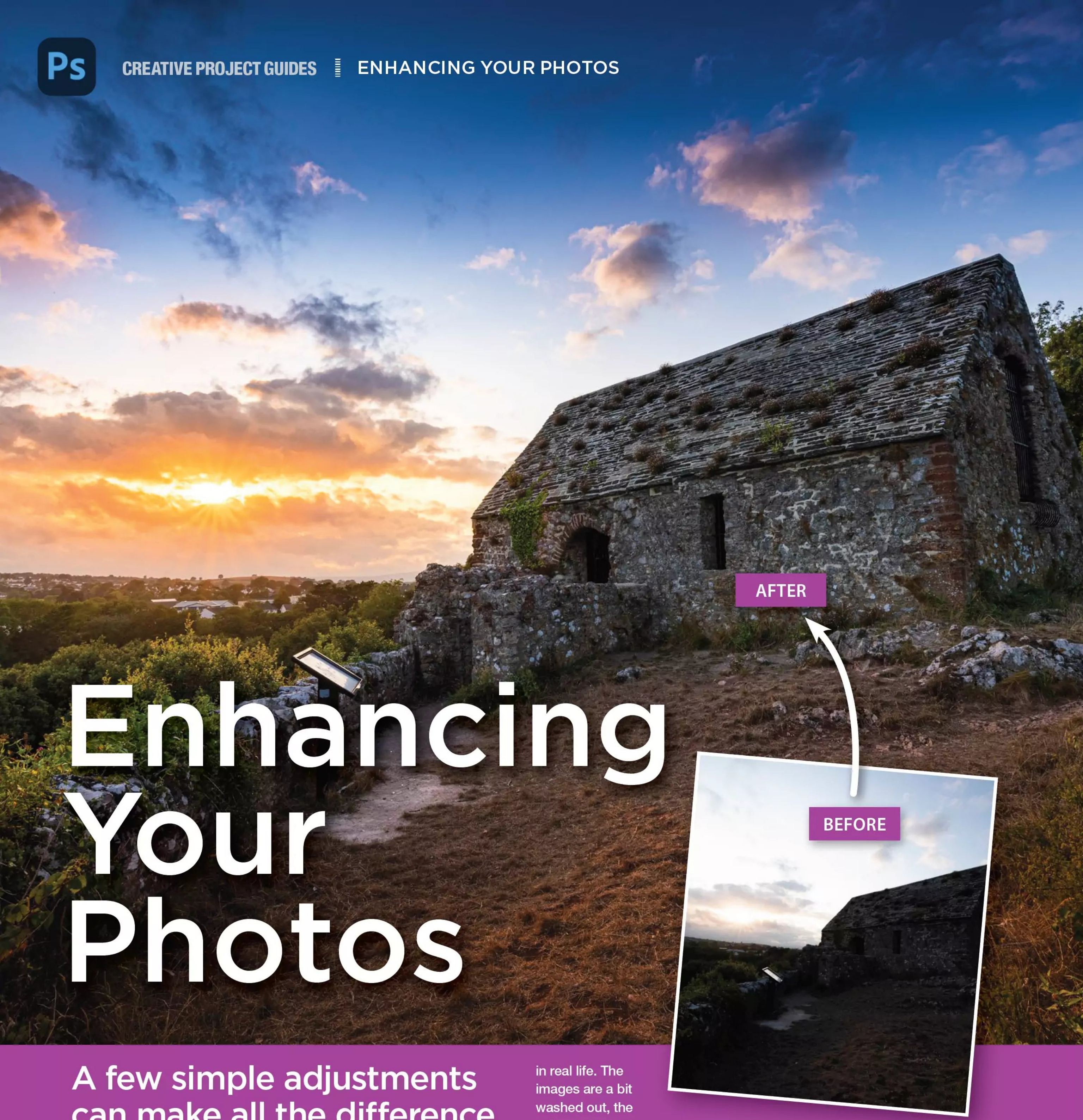
26 With those final adjustments, your statue's transformation from marble to solid gold is complete. This technique can be used on many subjects, just remember to choose ones that can easily be removed from their backgrounds. So now you know. What else deserves the Midas Touch?





This is how you strike gold

An effective and visually stunning technique.

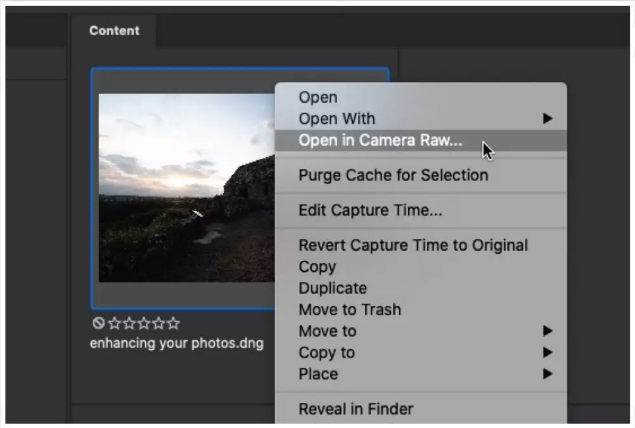


Enhancing Your Photos

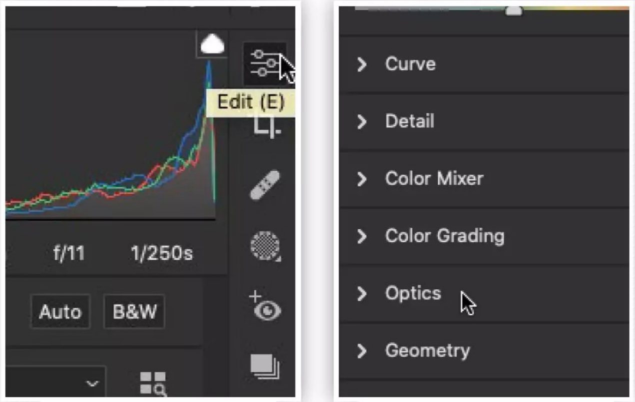
A few simple adjustments can make all the difference

Have you ever been out with your camera, taking shots of some beautiful scene? It's sunrise down by the water's edge. The light is amazing, the clouds are well defined and lit by the rising sun, there is a glow along the horizon and some cool reflections in the wet sand at your feet. You compose a strong yet simple shot and click off a few frames. When you get home and download them to your computer, you open them up and are surprised how different the images look to how it was in real life. The images are a bit washed out, the colours seem a little weak. Did you get your camera settings wrong? There's every chance you didn't. Sometimes what you see with your own eyes is not how the camera will interpret it. Your eyes have greater dynamic range than any sensor and they see more tonal variations. Don't worry though, with a few simple steps, you can take that image and enhance to not only match, but surpass, the conditions present when you took the shot. Adding more detail, contrast and saturation is referred to as making them 'pop'. Here's how you can make your own images 'pop'.

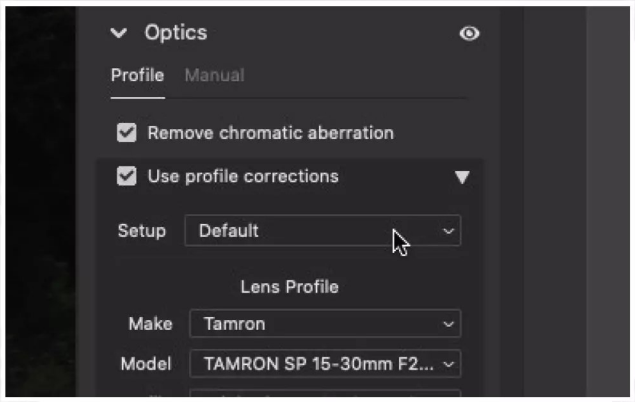
01 Our example is a moody evening hilltop chapel image. Although the exposure is a little off, it should be quite recoverable because of the leeway offered by the Raw file. The sky is a little bit overexposed but you'll be surprised what you can do with it.


Content
Open
Open With
Open in Camera Raw...
Purge Cache for Selection
Edit Capture Time...
Revert Capture Time to Original
Copy
Duplicate
Move to Trash
Move to
Copy to
Place
Reveal in Finder
enhancing your photos.dng

02 Our example is shown here in Adobe Bridge which is the application designed to manage, catalogue and keyword your image library. Since this is a Raw file, we can go ahead and open it up in Camera Raw, by right-clicking on it and choosing Open In Camera Raw.

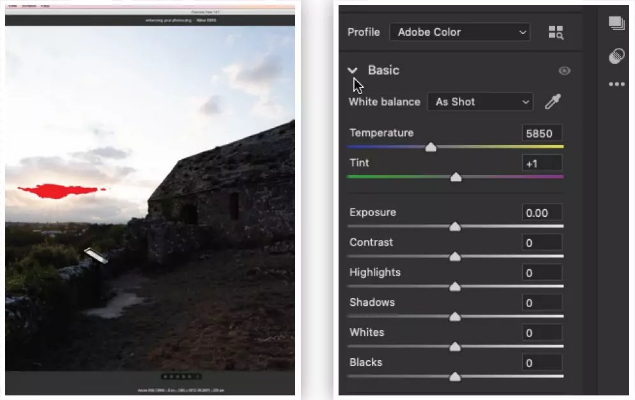

Edit (E)
f/11
1/250s
Auto
B&W
Curve
Detail
Color Mixer
Color Grading
Optics
Geometry

03 The image will open in Camera Raw, ready for editing. One of the first things to do is to click on Edit (E) in the toolbar and then choose the Optics panel. When you click it, the Optics panel will expand showing you all the available options for lens correction.


Optics
Profile
Manual
Lens Profile

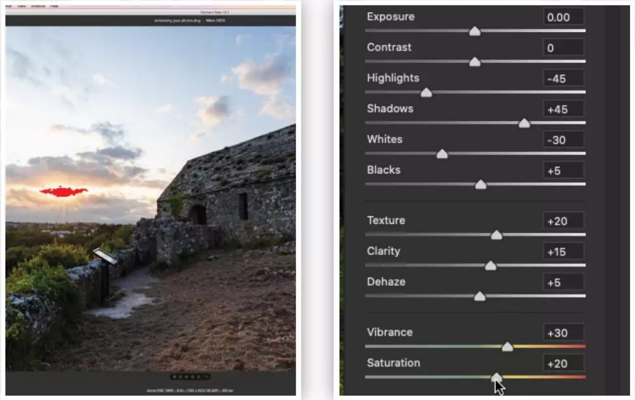
☑ Remove chromatic aberration
☑ Use profile corrections
Setup: Default
Make: Tamron
Model: TAMRON SP 15-30mm F2...

04 Profile Corrections assesses what equipment has been used to capture the image and removes any lens distortion from the Tamron 15-30mm lens that was used in this example, as well as any purple/green fringing that lenses can sometimes produce.



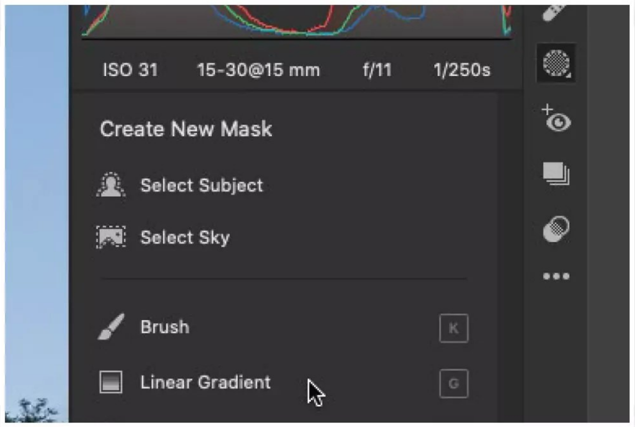
Profile: Adobe Color
White balance: As Shot
Temperature 5850
Tint +1
Exposure 0.00
Contrast 0
Highlights 0
Shadows 0
Whites 0
Blacks 0

05 Next, click on the Basic tab. This is where the majority of the required adjustments can be made to your image. Things like Temperature, Tint, Exposure, Contrast, Saturation and Highlights and Shadows can be altered here.

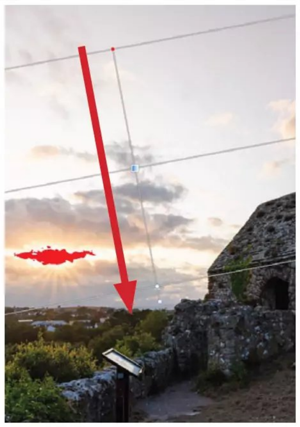


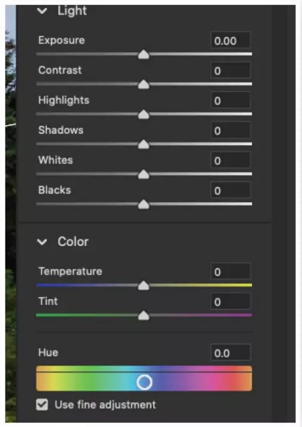
Exposure 0.00
Contrast 0
Highlights -45
Shadows +45
Whites -30
Blacks +5
Texture +20
Clarity +15
Dehaze +5
Vibrance +30
Saturation +20

06 We've made some simple changes to the picture. The Highlights and Whites have been reduced to keep detail in the bright areas of the clouds and the Shadows and Blacks have been lightened. Texture, Clarity, Dehaze, Vibrance and Saturation have been increased.



07 The next thing that would be a good improvement to the shot is to make the sky stronger at the top of the frame. Go to the toolbar and click the Masking button and choose the Linear Gradient option. Be aware that if a sky is too bright and burnt out, this effect may not work very well.

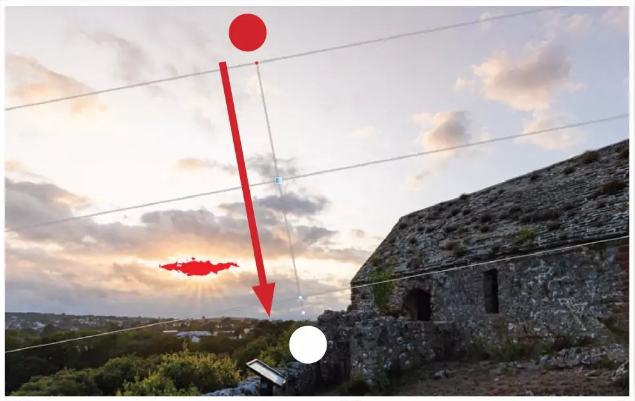




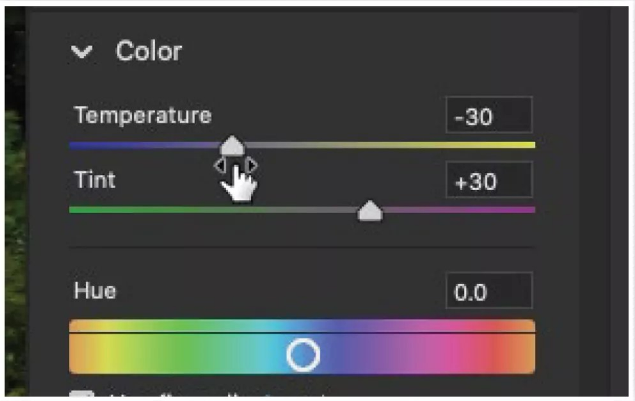
Light
Exposure 0.00
Contrast 0
Highlights 0
Shadows 0
Whites 0
Blacks 0

Color
Temperature 0
Tint 0
Hue 0.0
☑ Use fine adjustment

08 With the Linear Gradient chosen, click and drag from the top of the picture to a point just below the horizon. The values for the graduated filter are zeroed out at first so there is no apparent change. This is handy, since we can demonstrate the effect the adjustments make.

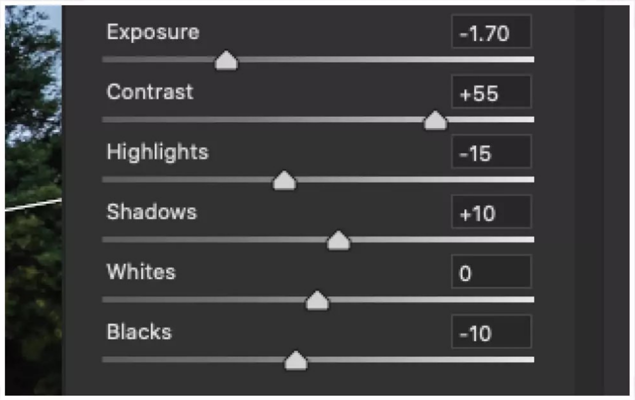


09 When using the Linear Gradient, the start point which is displayed in red will apply the effect at 100 per cent opacity. The effect then gradually fades to zero opacity at the end point, which is displayed in white. You can think of this as a digital version of a filter used on a camera.



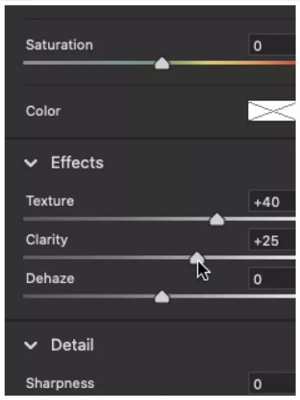
Color
Temperature -30
Tint +30
Hue 0.0

10 When you use the grad filter, its properties will be displayed on the right of the screen. We started by altering the Temperature slider to -30 at this point in the edit and the Tint value was changed to +30 to help add more depth to the colours in the sky and clouds.

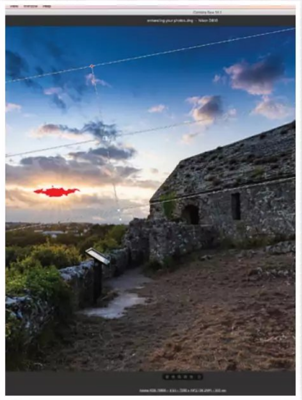


Exposure -1.70
Contrast +55
Highlights -15
Shadows +10
Whites 0
Blacks -10

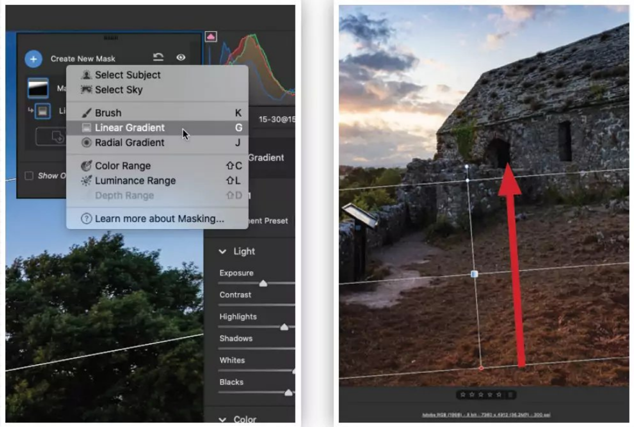
11 We dropped Exposure to -1.70 Contrast was increased to +55 to give it a little more punch. At this point in the processing stage, Highlights were -15 to reclaim some detail in the brightest parts. Shadows were +10 and Whites were left at 0 and Blacks -10.



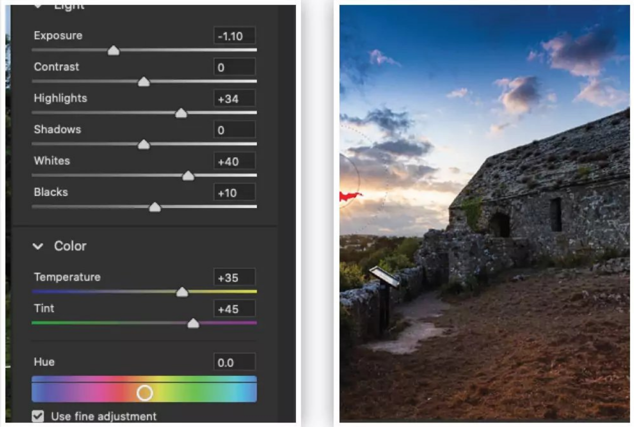
Saturation 0
Color
Effects
Texture +40
Clarity +25
Dehaze 0
Detail
Sharpness 0



12 The amount of Texture and Clarity was also boosted quite a bit to +40 and +25 respectively, to add midtone contrast to the clouds and Dehaze was left unaltered, but Saturation was left at 0. The sky is darker now, and the clouds have more colour, definition and contrast.


Create New Mask
Select Subject
Select Sky
Brush K
Linear Gradient G
Radial Gradient J
Color Range ⇧C
Luminance Range ⇧L
Depth Range ⇧D
Learn more about Masking...
Light
Exposure
Contrast
Highlights
Shadows
Whites
Blacks
Color

13 You can add more graduated effects to the foreground by clicking Create New Mask and clicking on Linear Gradient again. The new gradient will have all its adjustment parameters at zero, ready for you to begin adding them to suit your preference.



Light

Exposure -1.10

Contrast 0

Highlights +34

Shadows 0

Whites +40

Blacks +10

Color

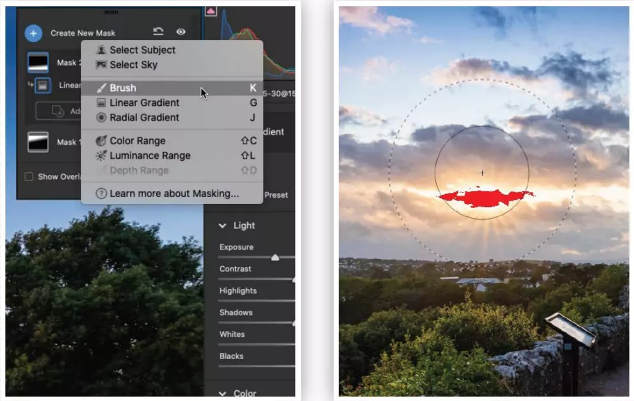
Temperature +35

Tint +45

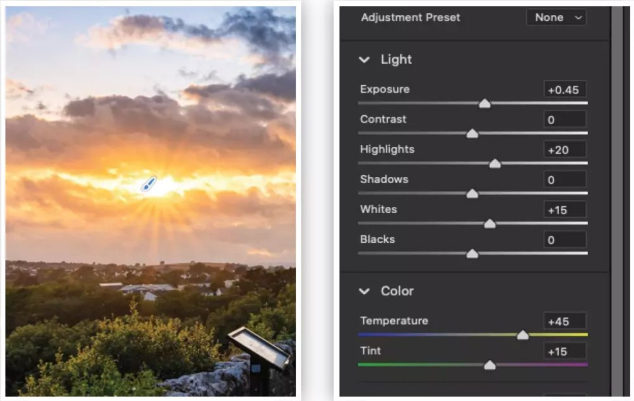
Hue 0.0

☑ Use fine adjustment

14 With the new grad active, you can alter all the settings until you have something you like. We've altered values to brighten the foreground and altered the Temperature and Tint values to make the ground a little more brown. Texture and Clarity has also been boosted.


Create New Mask
Mask 2
Mask 1
Show Overlay
Select Subject
Select Sky
Brush K
Linear Gradient G
Radial Gradient J
Color Range ⇧C
Luminance Range ⇧L
Depth Range ⇧D
Learn more about Masking...
Light
Exposure
Contrast
Highlights
Shadows
Whites
Blacks
Color

15 You can also make more targeted adjustments using the Brush (K) to paint adjustments onto your image. All the parameters you can adjust can be seen in the properties panel. You can alter the Size, Feather, Flow and Density in the properties panel as well.



Adjustment Preset None

Light

Exposure +0.45

Contrast 0

Highlights +20

Shadows 0

Whites +15

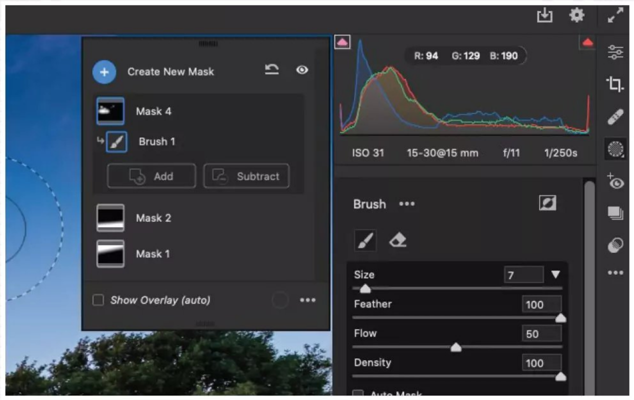
Blacks 0

Color

Temperature +45

Tint +15

16 With the adjustment brush applied to the clouds, you can set about altering the properties if you wish. We've made the brightest areas of the clouds warmer and boosted the Exposure, Highlights and Whites to bring out the light tones in the clouds without losing detail.


Create New Mask
Mask 4
Brush 1
Add
Subtract
Mask 2
Mask 1
Show Overlay (auto)
R: 94 G: 129 B: 190
ISO 31 15-30@15 mm f/11 1/250s
Brush
Auto Mask

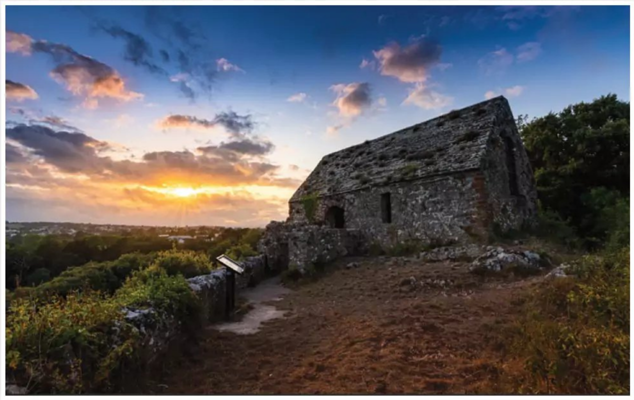
Size 7

Feather 100

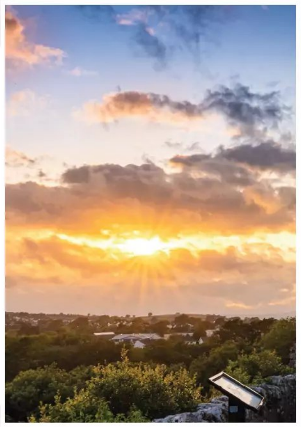
Flow 50

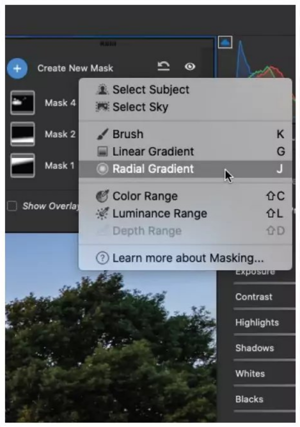
Density 100

17 Each Gradient or Brush you add can be clicked on and the values tweaked at any time. We went back to the Linear Gradient (G) and clicked on the top grad and decreased the Exposure value a little more and boosted the cool tones.

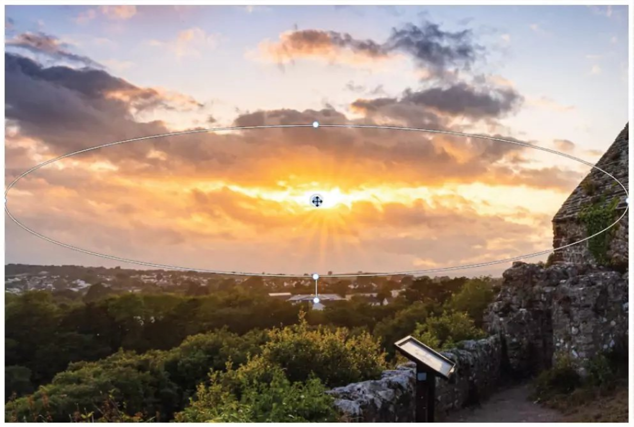


18 The edits are coming along nicely. The image is more tonally balanced and enhances the moody look that was present at the time of shooting. The colour temperature has been increased for warmer tones and the clouds have more detail and contrast.

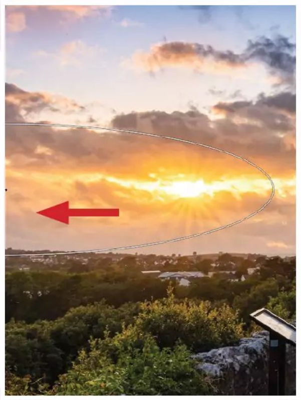


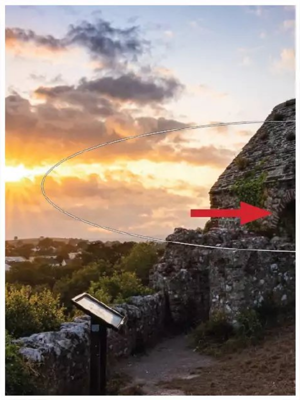

Create New Mask
Mask 4
Mask 2
Mask 1
Show Overlay
Select Subject
Select Sky
Brush K
Linear Gradient G
Radial Gradient J
Color Range ⇧C
Luminance Range ⇧L
Depth Range ⇧D
Learn more about Masking...
Exposure
Contrast
Highlights
Shadows
Whites
Blacks

19 Next, we want to boost the colours of the horizon a little more using the Radial Gradient (J). This has been amalgamated with the Linear and Brush filters and behaves like the Linear Gradient, but its effect is circular/elliptical rather than a straight line.

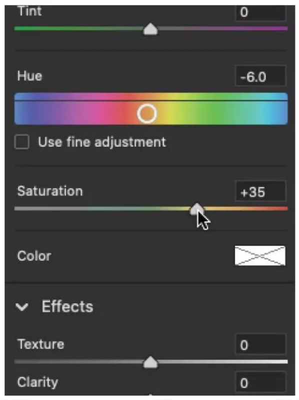


20 With the Radial Gradient selected, click and drag out an ellipse along the centre of the horizon just above the line of distant hills. The properties start at zero by default again, so we are able to demonstrate the changes as we make them.

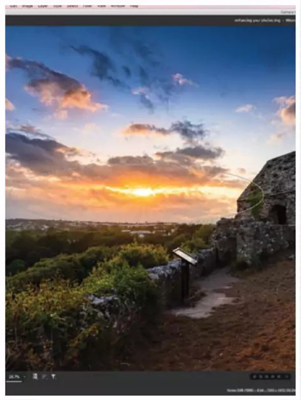




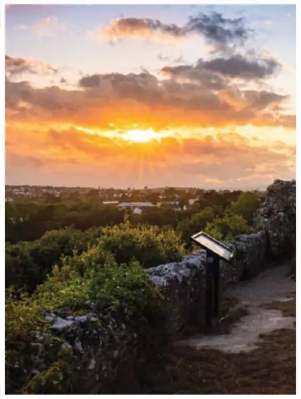
21 If you wish, you can click on the centre pin of the filter and move it around to any part of the picture without any issue. After trying a few positions we've just placed it on the horizon where the sun is lighting up the sky and the land in front of the chapel.

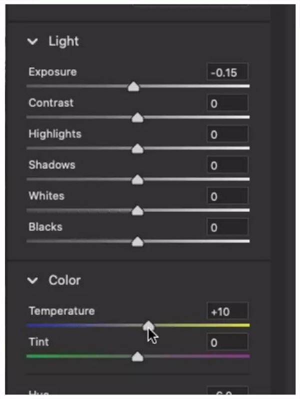


Tint 0
Hue -6.0
☐ Use fine adjustment
Saturation +35
Color
Effects
Texture 0
Clarity 0



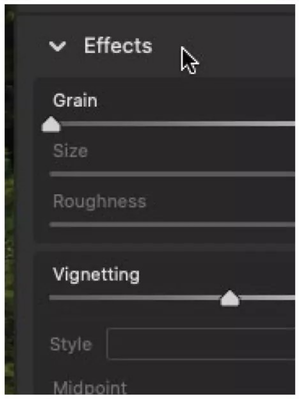
22 To give the image even more of a glow, we want to warm up the horizon. You can actually colour the filter by clicking on the Hue selector from the Radial Gradient properties on the right of the screen and selecting a tint that suits the scene best. You can boost the Saturation if needed.

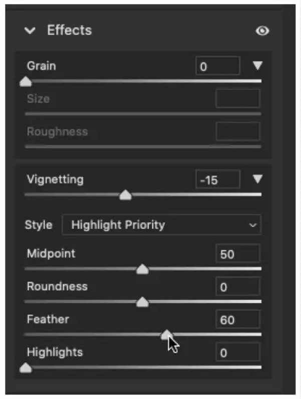




Light
Exposure -0.15
Contrast 0
Highlights 0
Shadows 0
Whites 0
Blacks 0
Color
Temperature +10
Tint 0

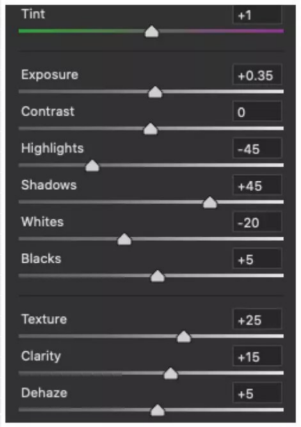
23 You can also alter the filter's other properties to further amend the quality, colour and brightness of the effect to your taste. We've altered Exposure to -0.15 and Temperature to +10. Remember that you can go back into this adjustment and alter it at any time.


Effects
Grain
Size
Roughness
Vignetting
Style
Midpoint



Effects
Grain 0
Size
Roughness
Vignetting -15
Style Highlight Priority
Midpoint 50
Roundness 0
Feather 60
Highlights 0

24 One final and optional adjustment is to add a small amount of vignette to the picture. If you go to the Effects panel add Vignetting to darken the edges of the photo. We've made the Amount -15, Midpoint 50 and Feather 60.



Tint +1

Exposure +0.35

Contrast 0

Highlights -45

Shadows +45

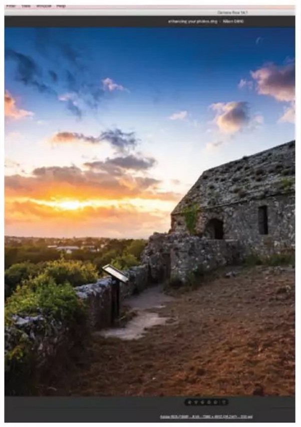
Whites -20

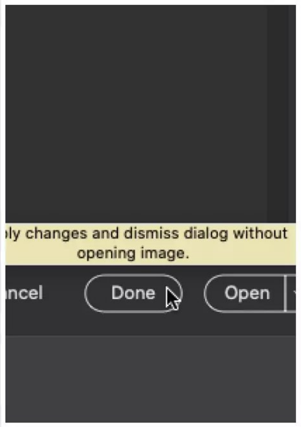
Blacks +5

Texture +25

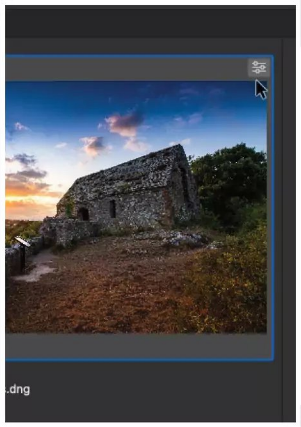
Clarity +15

Dehaze +5



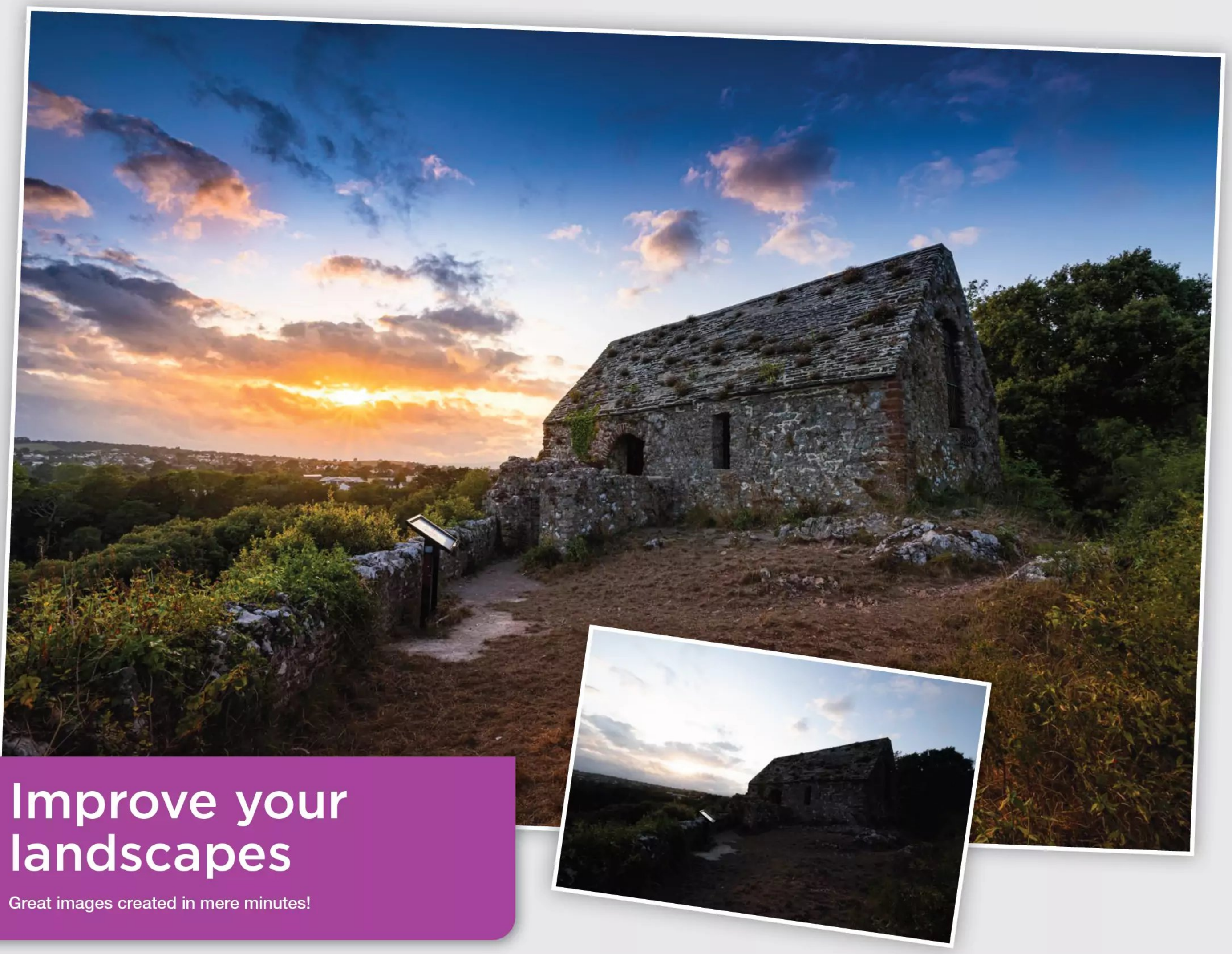


ly changes and dismiss dialog without opening image.



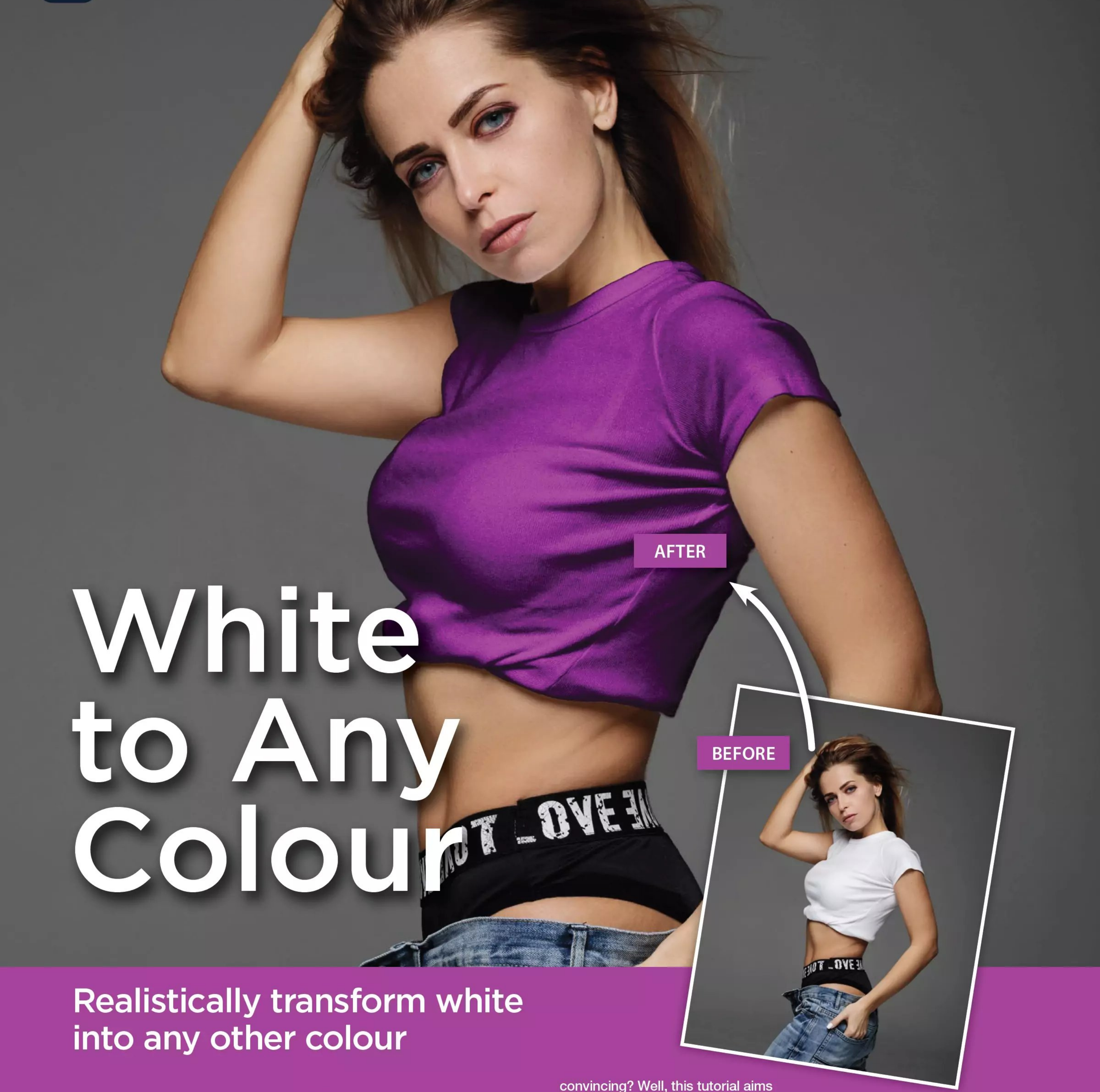
25 Back in the Basic panel, we've made some final edits to the image, boosting Exposure a little, lifting the Vibrance and Saturation and increasing the strength of the Whites. We also made a crop of the image. Our adjustments for this image are now complete.

26 You can just click on the Done button and apply all the adjustments you made non-destructively to the file. When you do, the image will show the changes made along with small icons in the top right of the thumbnail to indicate it has adjustments and crops attached.



Improve your landscapes

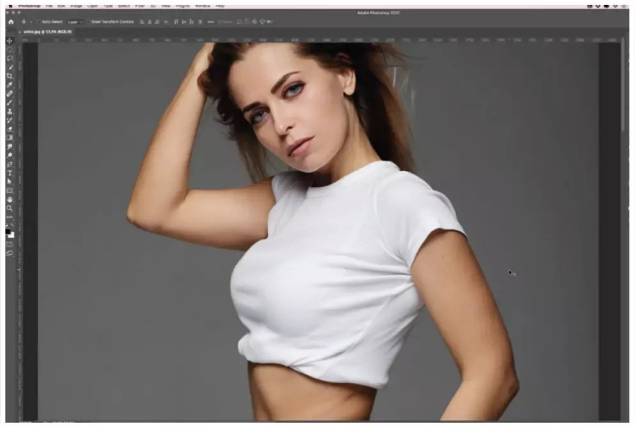
Great images created in mere minutes!



White to Any Colour

Realistically transform white into any other colour

One of the many techniques that Photoshop allows us, the digital artist, to do, is to manipulate colour and tone. Changing the colour of an object to a totally different colour is not too hard, but to do it in a realistic way can be a bit more challenging. The complexity increases when your original colour is white. Imagine trying to change a white shirt into a black one. How would you even do that and make it look convincing? Well, this tutorial aims to show you a relatively easy way to convert a white object with shadows and highlights and convert its colour into any other colour and still look great. We also take it a step further and convert the white object to black. In our example, we have a studio portrait shot where the subject is wearing a plain white shirt which we want to be any other colour than that. Let's get into it.



01 Fire up your copy of Photoshop and go to File > Open (Cmd + O) and navigate to where you have stored your example that you want to convert. As we mentioned, our example is a fashion model in a studio setup wearing blue jeans and a white shirt. The shirt is our focus in this tutorial.

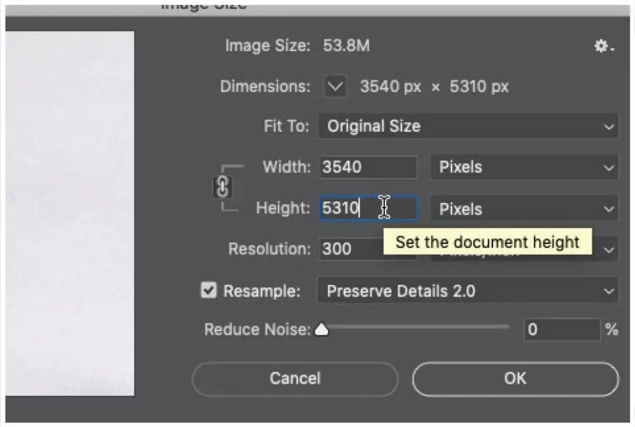
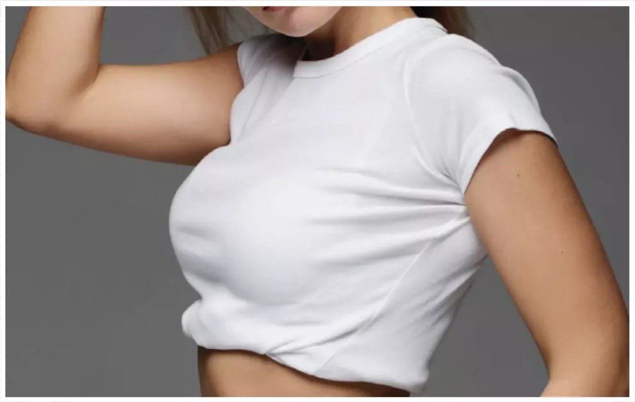
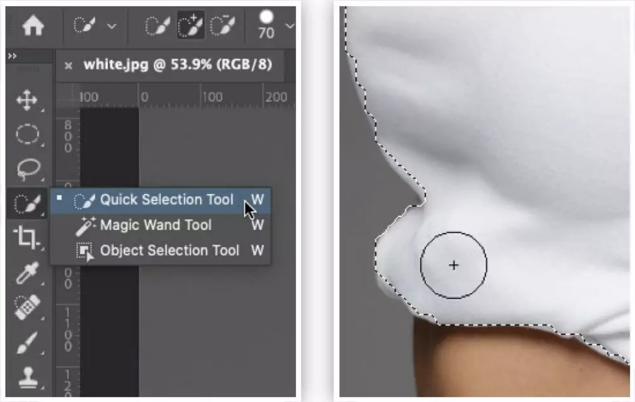


Image Size: 53.8M
Dimensions: 3540 px × 5310 px
Fit To: Original Size
Width: 3540 Pixels
Height: 5310 Pixels
Set the document height
Resolution: 300
☑ Resample: Preserve Details 2.0
Reduce Noise: 0 %

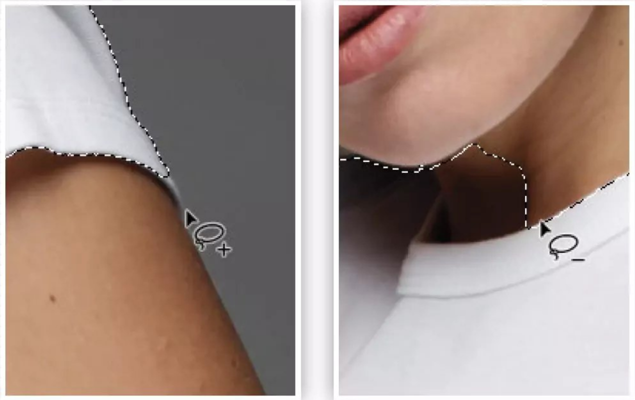
02 Our particular document is 3540 pixels wide by 5310 pixels high. Any brushes and adjustment values used are set according to this size of image. If you are working with an image that is a different size, be aware that you may need to alter your values to suit your image size.



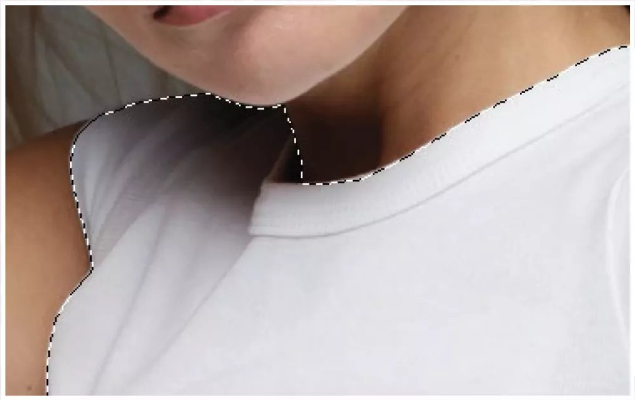
03 Since the shirt is the subject of our tutorial, the first thing we need to do is to create a selection of it. This can be achieved in a number ways. Feel free to use whatever selection method you prefer. Choose the Lasso Tool, Pen Tool, Magic Wand, it's entirely up to you.



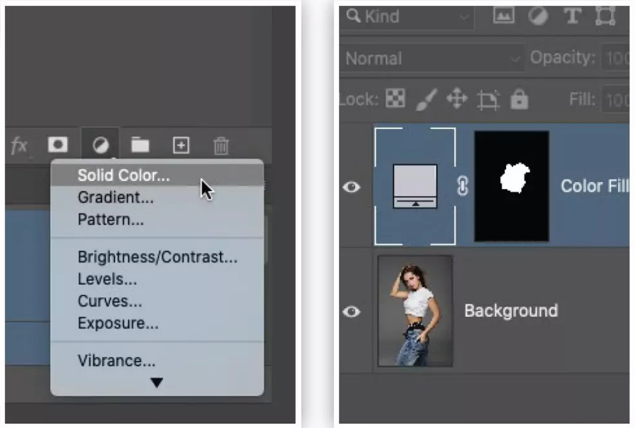
04 Since the shirt is quite well-defined, we opted to use the Quick Selection Tool (W). It was then a case of dragging the brush around the perimeter of the shirt, adding to the selection as you go. Keep adding any areas the brush misses until it is all selected with marching ants.



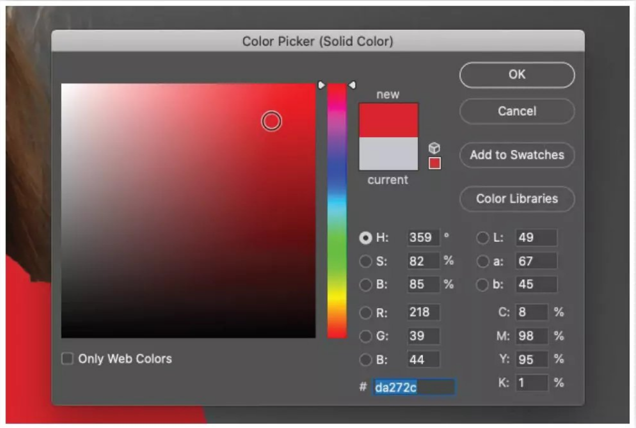
05 If you have any problem areas that the Quick Selection Tool cannot cope with, you can always switch to the Lasso Tool and click the Add To Selection button in the Tool Options panel to add areas of shirt to the selection or click Subtract From Selection to do the opposite.



06 Spend some time getting the selection as accurate as you can, but don't worry if it isn't pixel perfect since, in the following steps, there will be ways you can refine your initial selection area if you need them. Once you have your selection ready, you can proceed to the next step.

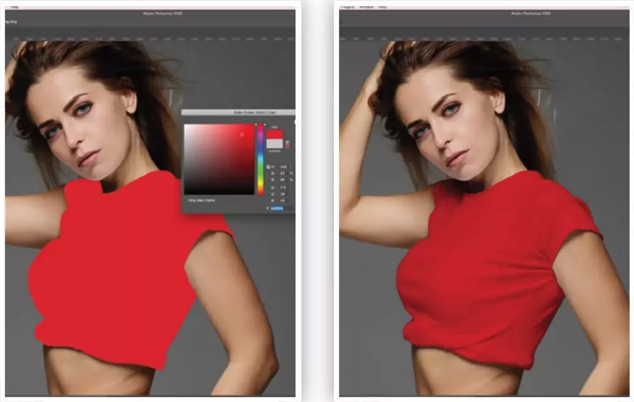

Solid Color...
Gradient...
Pattern...
Brightness/Contrast...
Levels...
Curves...
Exposure...
Vibrance...
Kind
Normal
Opacity:
Lock:
Fill:
Color Fill
Background

07 Go to the Layer Options panel and click on Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer. Choose Solid Color from the menu. This will add a masked Color Fill 1 adjustment layer above your main image in the shape of your selection. Double-click the Color Fill 1 thumbnail to open its properties.

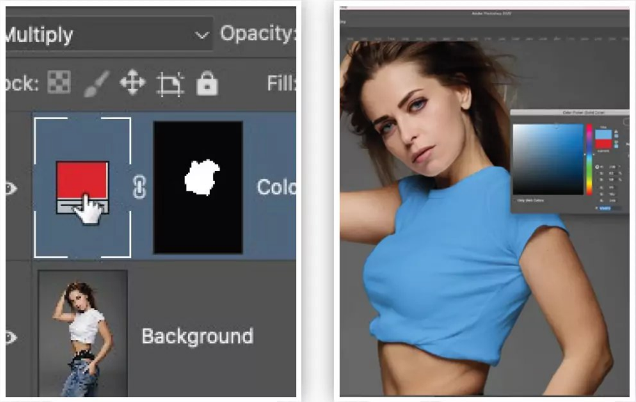

Color Picker (Solid Color)
new
current
OK
Cancel
Add to Swatches
Color Libraries
Only Web Colors

H: 359 °
S: 82 %
B: 85 %
R: 218
G: 39
B: 44
L: 49
a: 67
b: 45
C: 8 %
M: 98 %
Y: 95 %
K: 1 %
# da272c

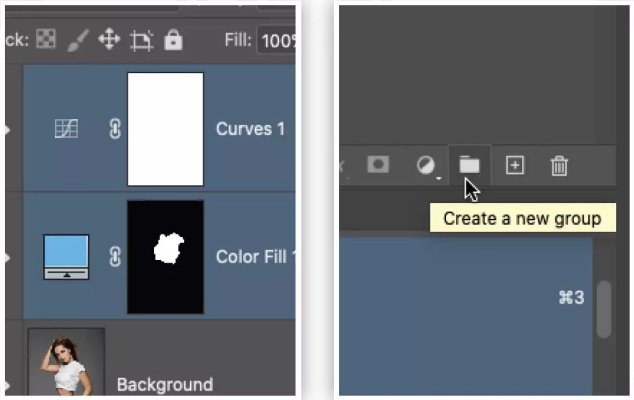
08 In the Solid Color Color Picker, choose a colour that you want to use to replace the white shirt. We have chosen a bright red colour to begin with. Since this is a non-destructive adjustment layer, you can come back to this at any time and alter the colour to something else if required.



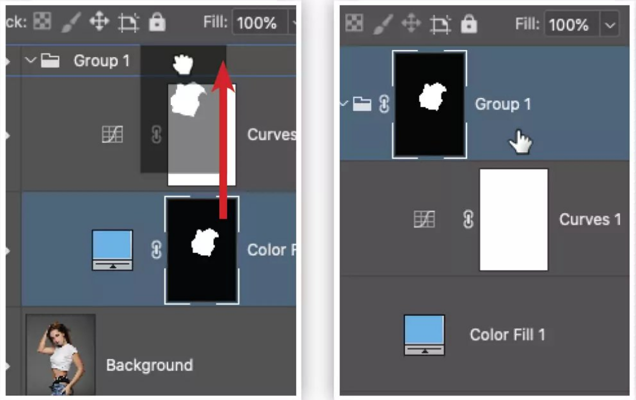
09 At the moment, the red colour is just an opaque blob, with no detail in it whatsoever. Keep the Color Fill 1 layer active and go the Blend Mode panel and change it from Normal to Multiply. Now, you will be able to see the darker tones of the shirt below showing through into the red colour.


Multiply
Opacity:
Lock:
Fill:
Colo
Background

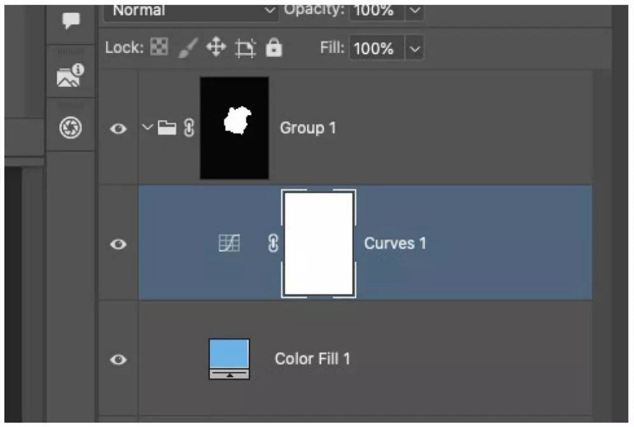
10 As we mentioned, you can alter the colour of the fill at any time by double-clicking the thumbnail and going tot he Color Picker and selecting a new colour. We went back in and chose a blue colour this time, but we couldn't help noticing that the colours still looked a little flat.


Lock:
Fill: 100%
Curves 1
Color Fill 1
Background
Create a new group
⌘3

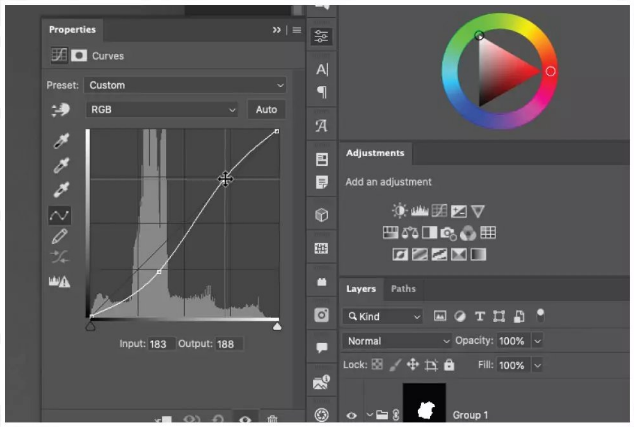
11 We reckoned that adding Curves adjustments would do the trick, but realised each new adjustment would need its own mask so only the shirt was affected. Rather than multiple masks for each layer, we selected what we currently had and created a new group Folder called Group 1.


Lock:
Fill: 100%
Group 1
Curves
Color F
Background
Group 1
Curves 1
Color Fill 1

12 Now, you can simply drag the mask from the Color Fill 1 layer and drop it onto the Group 1 tab. All subsequent adjustment layers can be put in this Group and they all share the same mask. This saves a bit of messing around and the need to create multiple masks of the same thing.

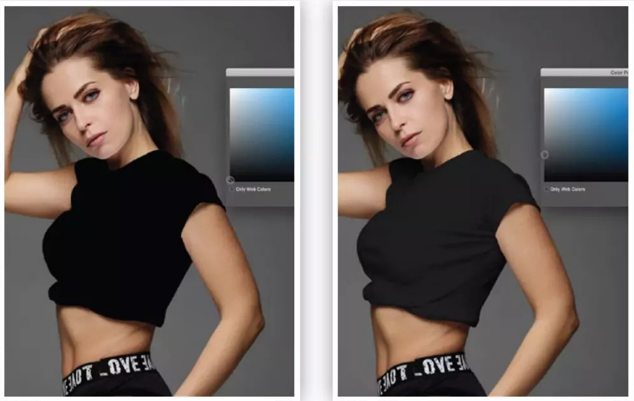

Normal
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
Group 1
Curves 1
Color Fill 1

13 So now Group 1 currently consists of the Color Fill 1 layer and a Curves 1 layer we have yet to adjust. Double-click Curves 1 to open the Properties panel. We want to use this adjustment to add a little more contrast and punch to the blue colour and the shirt.

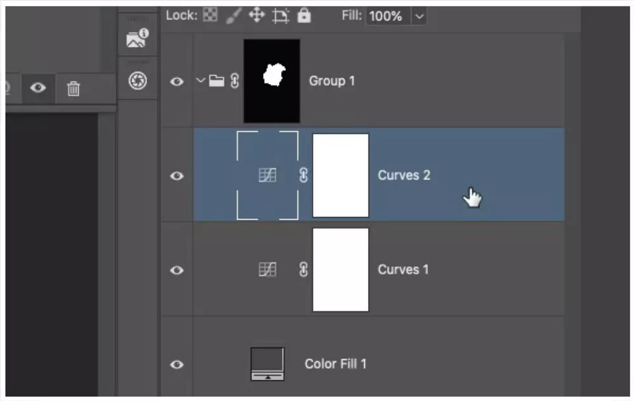

Properties
Curves
Preset: Custom
RGB
Auto
Adjustments
Add an adjustment
Layers
Paths
Kind
Normal
Opacity: 100%
Lock:
Fill: 100%
Group 1

Input: 183 Output: 188

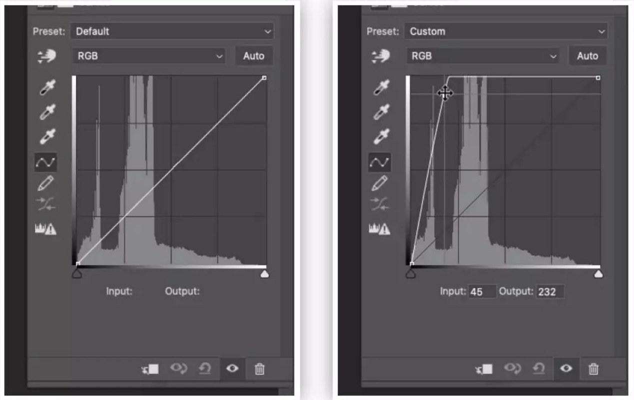
14 Altering the curve as shown to a flat s-curve increases the dark areas and brightens the highlight areas for a better looking result. That's great, but what happens if you want a really dark colour? In fact, what happens if you want the darkest colour of all - black?



15 If you double-click the Color Fill 1 layer and go to the Color Picker again, choosing solid black just doesn't look right. The truth is that absolute black doesn't really allow any detail to show through. You're better off choosing a dark grey which looks more authentic anyway.

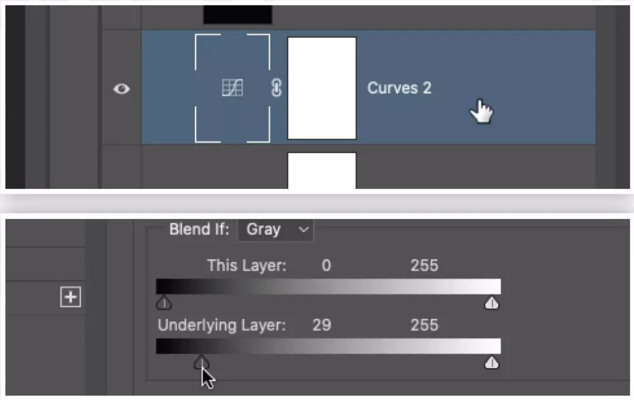

Lock:
Fill: 100%
Group 1
Curves 2
Curves 1
Color Fill 1

16 The black shirt looks ok, but it could do with more enhancement to show more highlights and detail. That's not a problem. If you go to the Layer Options panel again and click Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer and add a new Curves 2 adjustment layer above your current layers.


Preset: Default
RGB
Auto
Input:
Output:
Preset: Custom
RGB
Auto

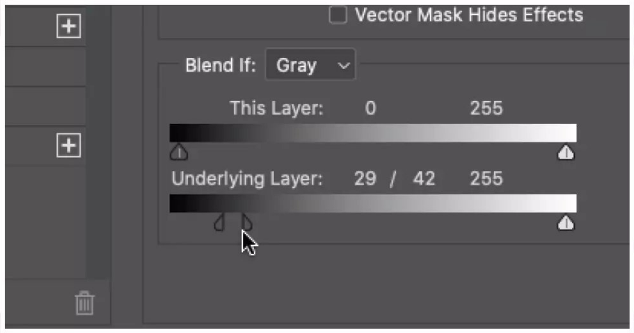
Input: 45 Output: 232

17 Double-click the Curves 2 layer thumbnail to open its Properties panel. Click on the curve down in the shadows and drag it up vertically near the top as shown. The shirt will appear to turn light grey, but we can now adjust its Layer style to make it look much better.



Blend If: Gray
This Layer: 0 255
Underlying Layer: 29 255

18 Double-click the Curves 2 layer (to the right of the layer mask thumbnail. This opens up the Layer Style panel. We will be working in the Blend If section. Click and drag the left-most Underlying Layer slider towards the right and notice how black starts to bleed through.

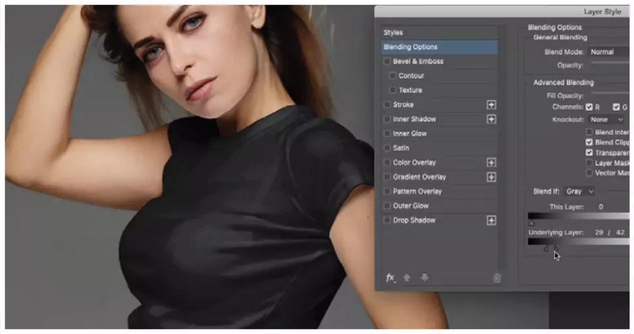


☐ Vector Mask Hides Effects

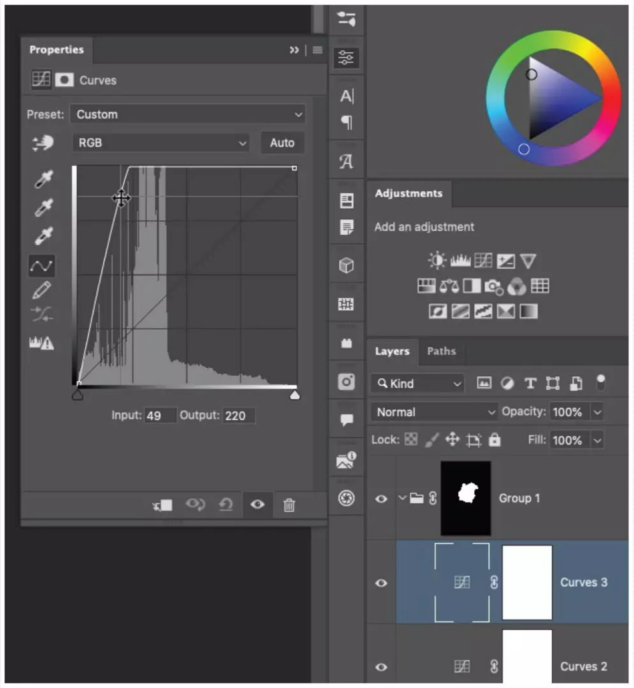
Blend If: Gray

This Layer: 0 255

Underlying Layer: 29 / 42 255


Layer Style
Styles
Blending Options
Bevel & Emboss
Contour
Texture
Stroke
Inner Shadow
Inner Glow
Satin
Color Overlay
Gradient Overlay
Pattern Overlay
Outer Glow
Drop Shadow
Blending Options
General Blending
Blend Mode: Normal
Opacity:
Advanced Blending
Fill Opacity:
Channels: R G
Knockout: None
Blend If: Gray
This Layer: 0
Underlying Layer: 29 / 42

19 The current blend is looking quite harsh but if you press Alt and click the slider, you can break it in half and drag the right half further towards the right. As you do, you will see the tones change to more subtle dark greys. Tweak the two halves of the slider to suit your taste.


Properties
Curves
Adjustments
Add an adjustment
Layers
Paths
Kind
Lock:
Group 1
Curves 3
Curves 2

Preset: Custom

RGB

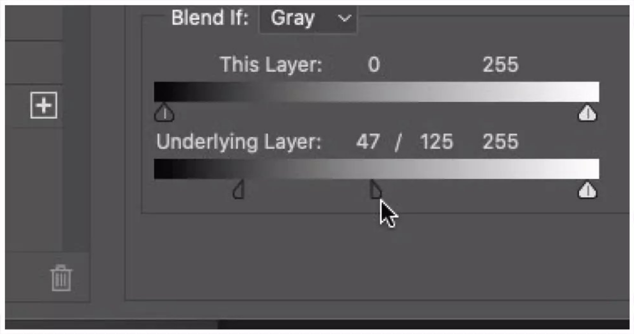
Auto

Input: 49 Output: 220

Normal Opacity: 100%

Fill: 100%

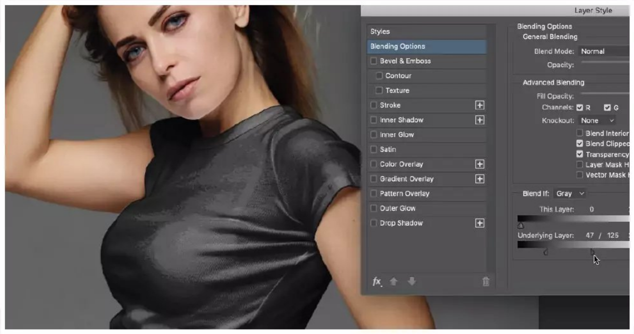
20 You could sit back now and call it done, but what happens if you want just a little more shine to the black shirt? Go to the Layer Options panel and add a third Curves adjustment layer. Alter the curve by dragging the shadows vertically like you did in the last step.



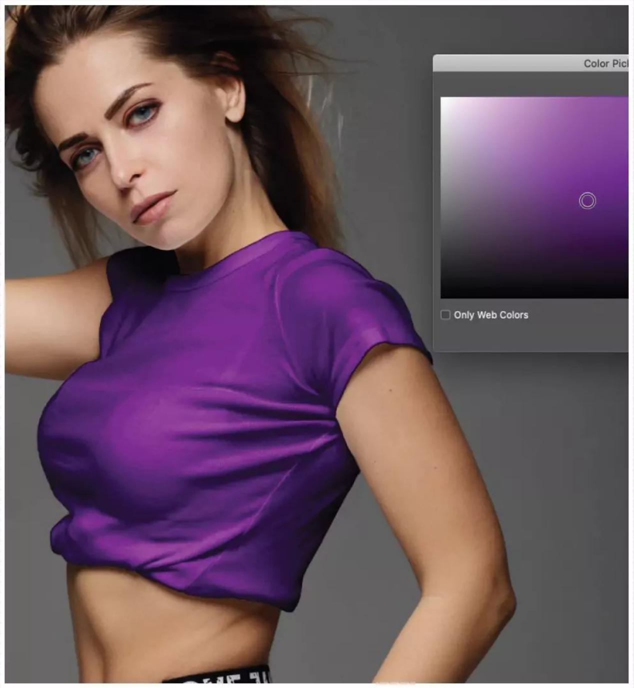
Blend If: Gray

This Layer: 0 255

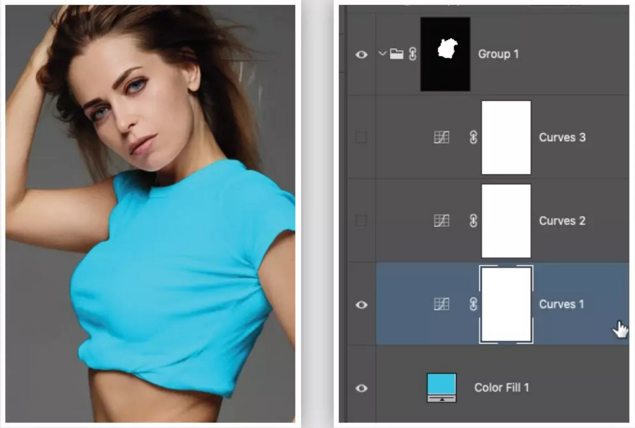
Underlying Layer: 47 / 125 255

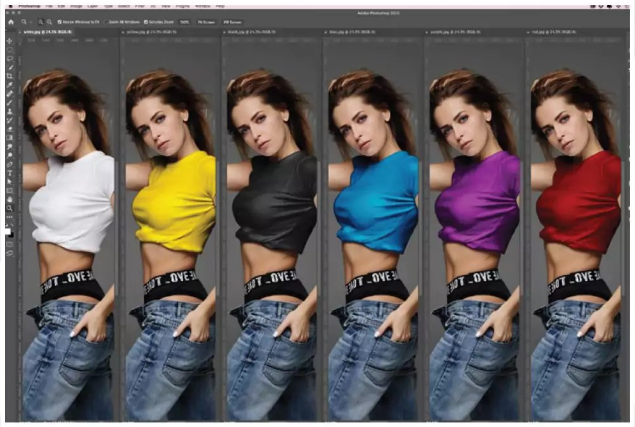

Layer Style
Styles
Blending Options
Bevel & Emboss
Contour
Texture
Stroke
Inner Shadow
Inner Glow
Satin
Color Overlay
Gradient Overlay
Pattern Overlay
Outer Glow
Drop Shadow
Blending Options
General Blending
Blend Mode: Normal
Opacity:
Advanced Blending
Fill Opacity:
Channels: R G
Knockout: None
Blend If: Gray
This Layer: 0
Underlying Layer: 47 / 125

21 Double-click to the right of the Curves 3 layer to open the Layer Style panel again. Click on the left-most Underlying Layer slider and drag it towards the right and split it to refine the blend. You should notice that the shirt has more contrast and a appears a little shinier.


Color Pic
☐ Only Web Colors

22 Now that you have all these adjustments set up for a darker and shinier look, you can go back to the Color Fill 1 layer, open its properties and choose any dark colour to get the same feel across a broad range of dark colours that look a bit like silk because of the range of highlights.





23 Bear in mind that if you want to use lighter colours at any time, the current setup of adjustments may not work so well. If you want to go back to a light blue for instance, simply choose the new lighter colour and turn off the Curves 2 and Curves 3 adjustment layers if required.

24 We took the time to try a few colours to see how well the technique holds up. We were happy with the results and had a range of colours from yellow, blue, dark blue, purple and black that all came out really well. Bear in mind certain colours may require tweaks of the Curves layers.

Show your true colours

Simple effects for maximum results.

Inside the Edit

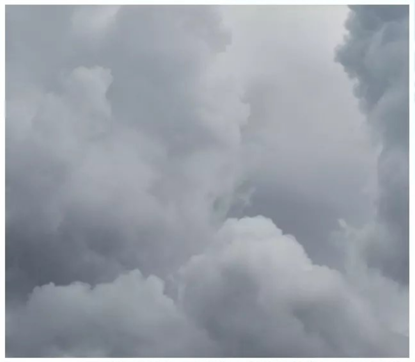
Have you ever happened across photos or examples of digital art and wondered how it was done? The truth is, the ability to be a great digital artist is within us all thanks to Photoshop and its host of tools and techniques. This section unpicks a number of artistic creations and gives you a quick low-down on how each one was accomplished.

Surreal Images

01

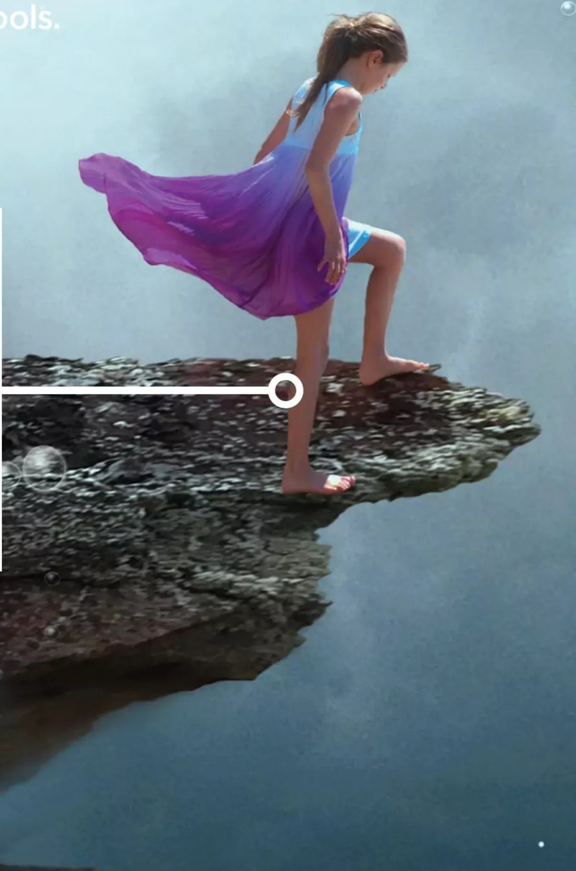
This surreal image is relatively simple in terms of composition and all the elements are free to use from Pixabay. The fish and the bubbles were transparent PNGs and the other elements could easily be cut out using your favourite selection tools.

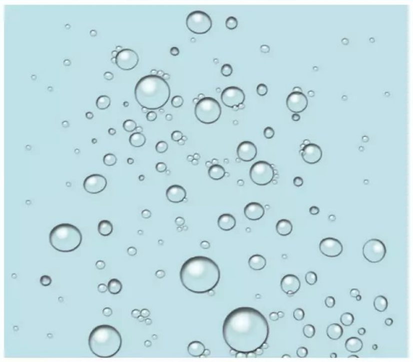
The base background was a simple cloud image with not much in the way of distractions.



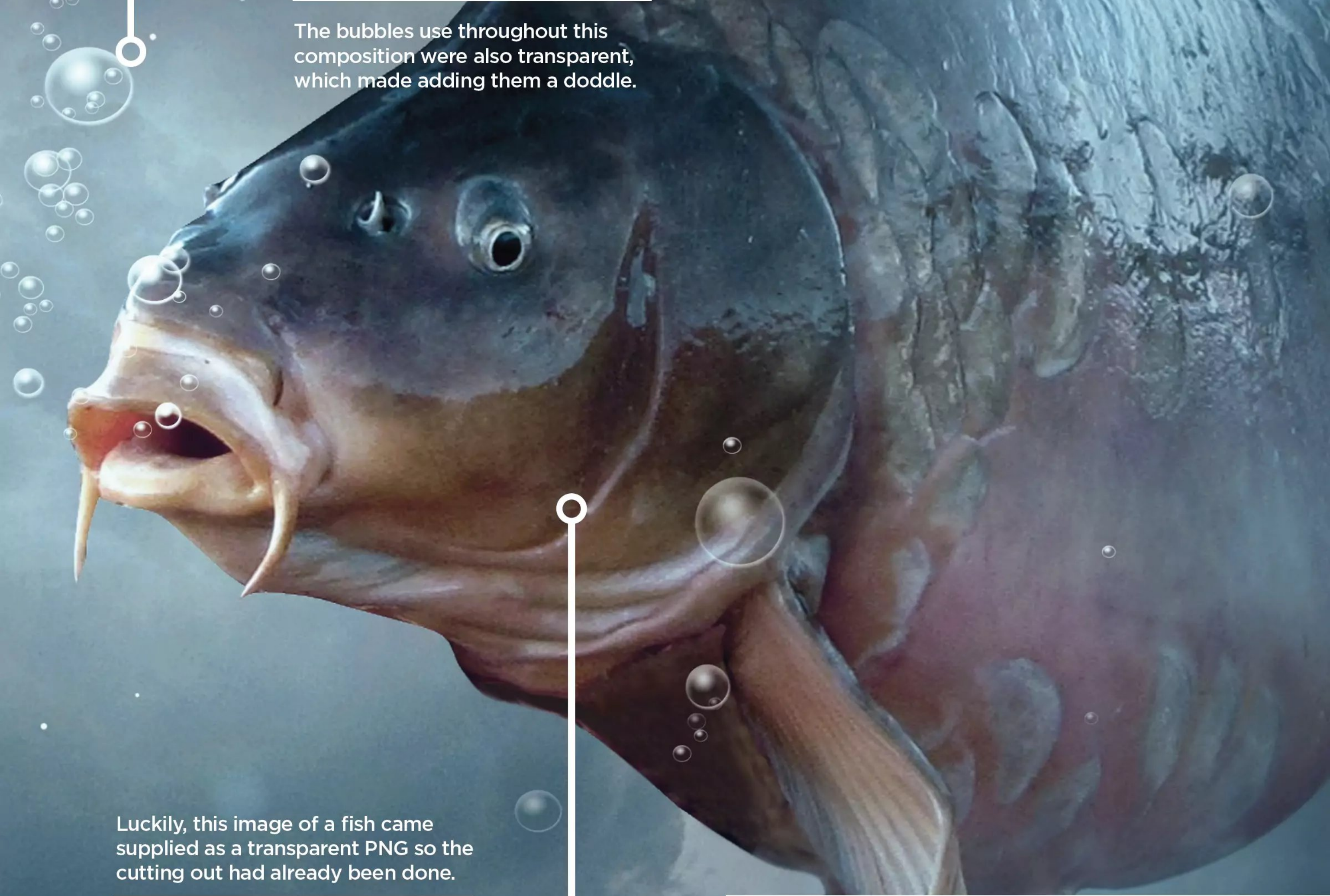
The girl's outline is relatively clean against the background, so cutting her out was quite easy.

This rocky stack provides the plinth for the girl to stand on. It has been cut out, stretched and flipped.

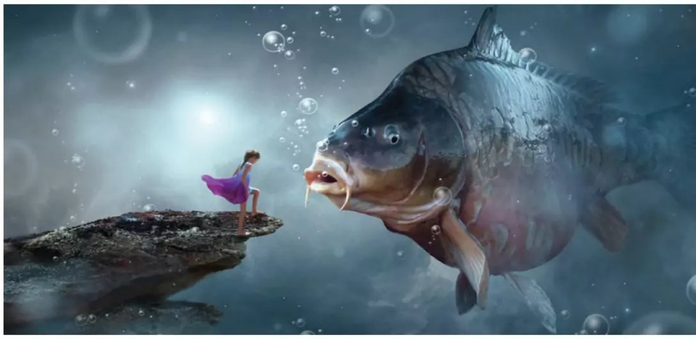




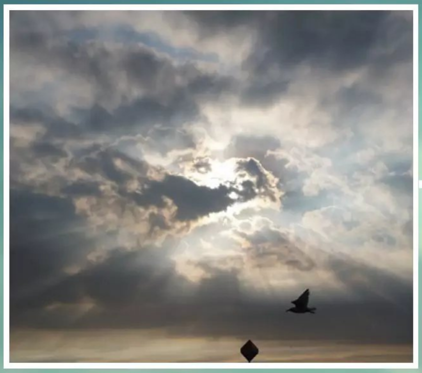
The bubbles use throughout this composition were also transparent, which made adding them a doddle.

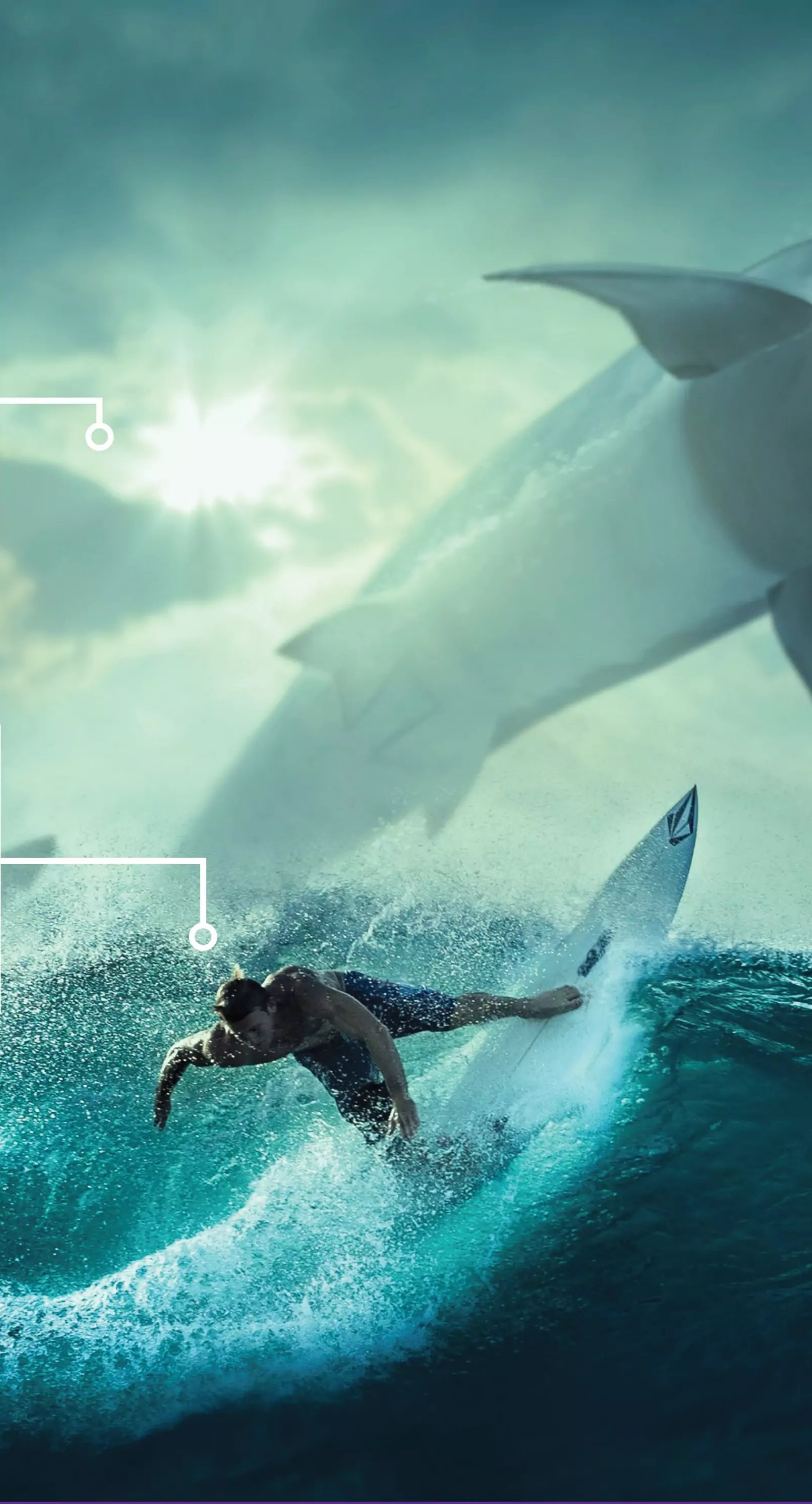


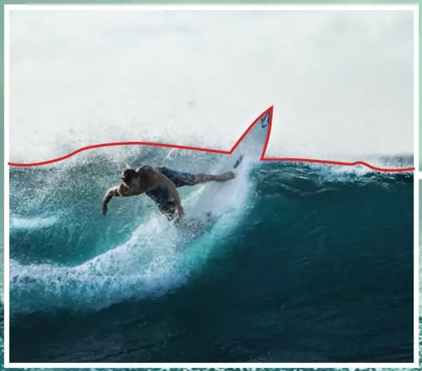
Luckily, this image of a fish came supplied as a transparent PNG so the cutting out had already been done.



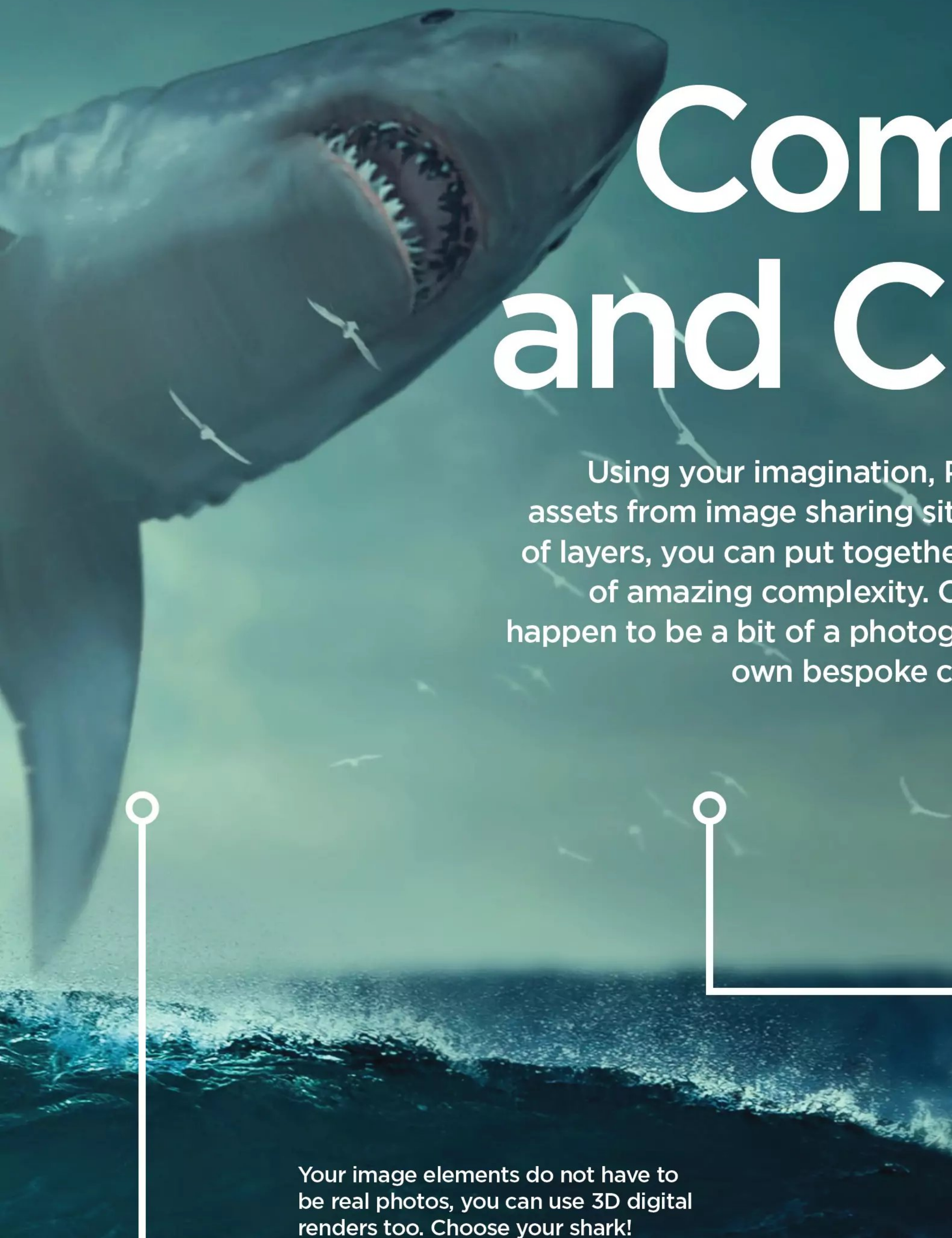
The sky in the base image was a bit bland, so an additional image of clouds was blended in.







The main image of the surfer created a complication when it came to dropping the sharks in. The top of the surf was comprised of many fine droplets which would be very difficult to mask. You can make a simple mask that can be over-painted with spatter brushes of similar colour to the water to create your own spray. To make it a non-destructive edit, you can over-paint on additional layers to preserve all the base elements.



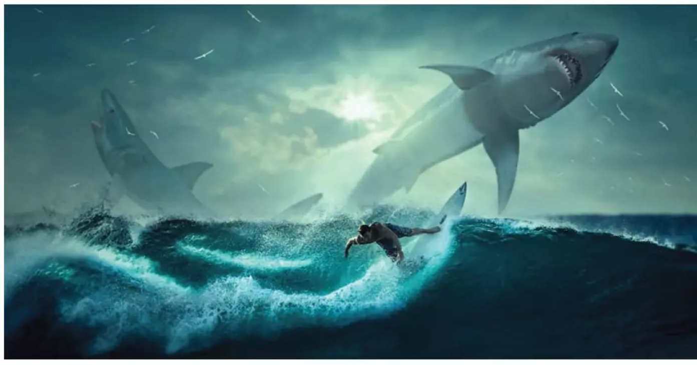
Combine and Create

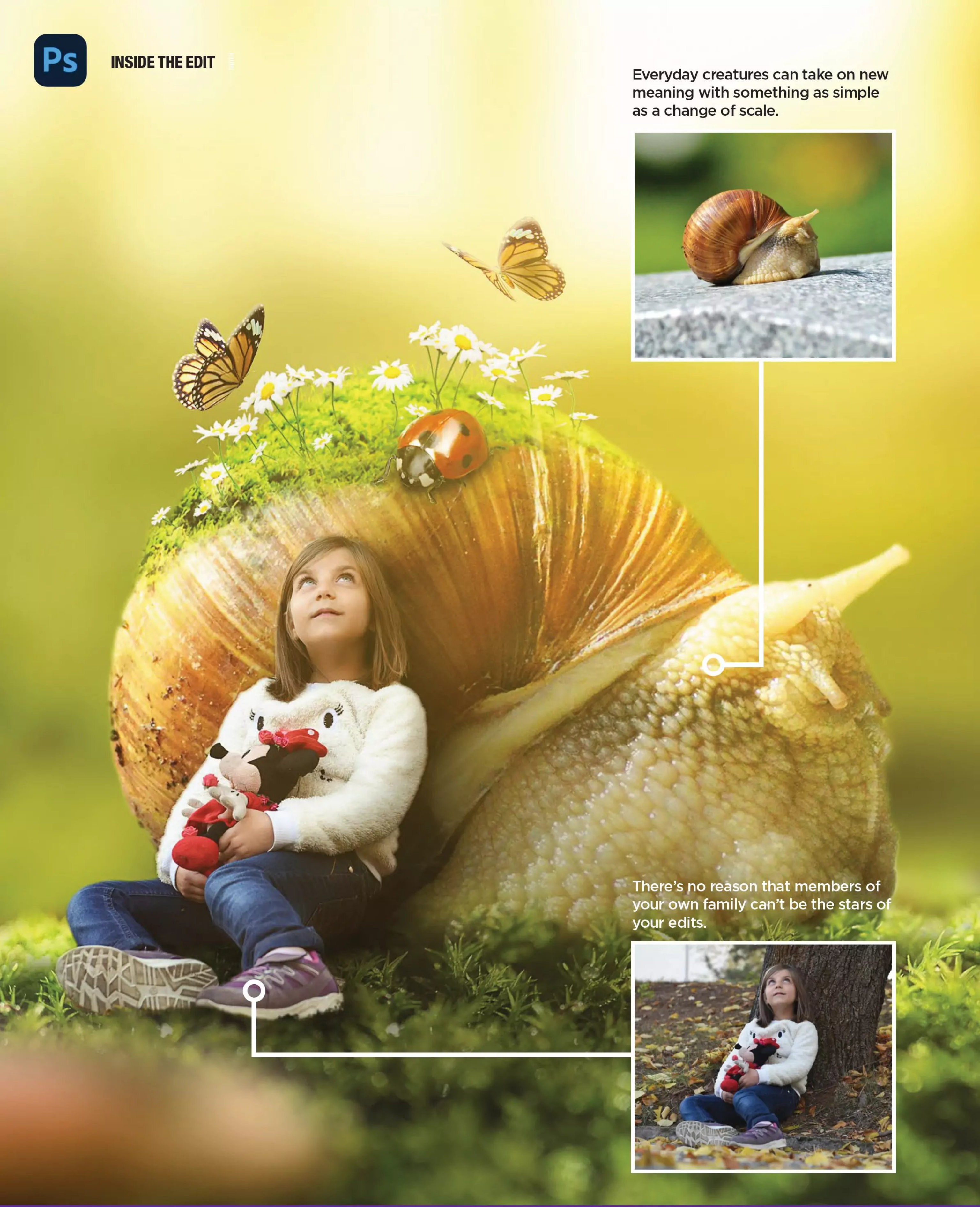
02

Using your imagination, Photoshop, free assets from image sharing sites and a bunch of layers, you can put together compositions of amazing complexity. Of course, if you happen to be a bit of a photographer, you can shoot your own bespoke content not seen elsewhere.

This simple bird image was reversed out and blended into the main image using the screen blend mode.

Your image elements do not have to be real photos, you can use 3D digital renders too. Choose your shark!





Everyday creatures can take on new meaning with something as simple as a change of scale.

There's no reason that members of your own family can't be the stars of your edits.

Various creatures and plants have been cut out and placed in the scene to populate it.

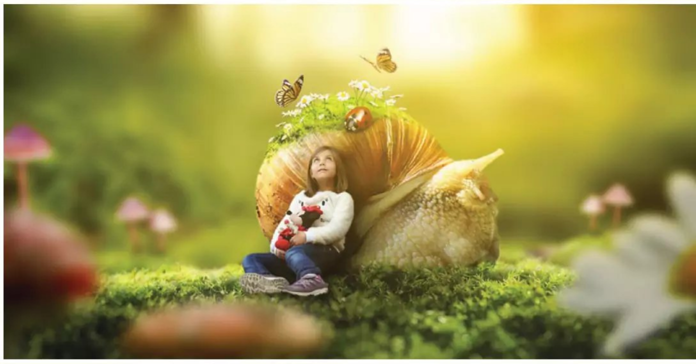
Get Inspired

03

The most commonplace images, be they photos of your family, snaps taken during a woodland walk, or assets procured on the web, can all be combined to let Photoshop do what it does best. When it comes to adding elements together into new compositions, Photoshop's layer-based system makes the process easy.

This mossy image provides the ground on which the girl is sitting as well as covering the snail's shell.

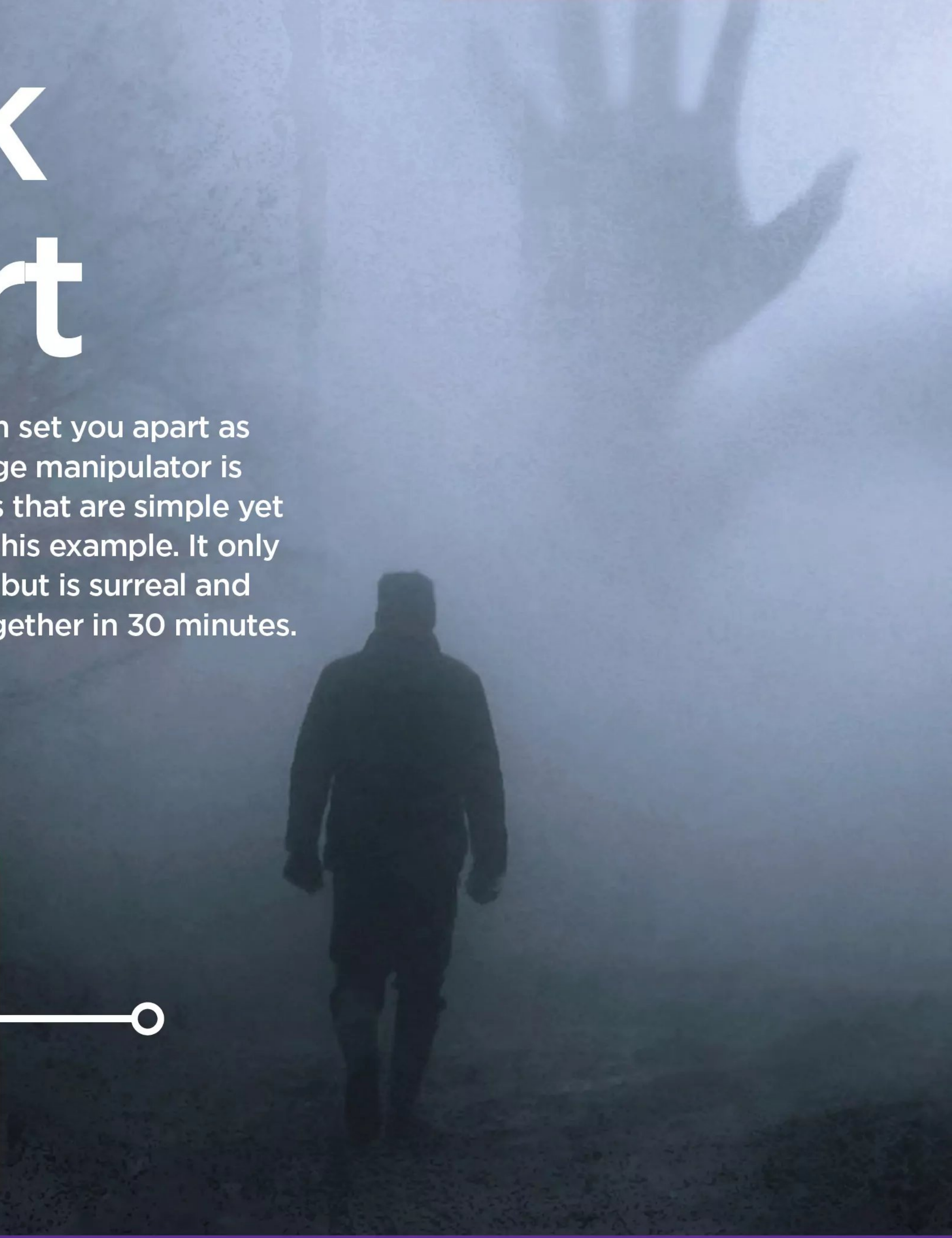
This image provides the main background and environment for the rest of the edit.



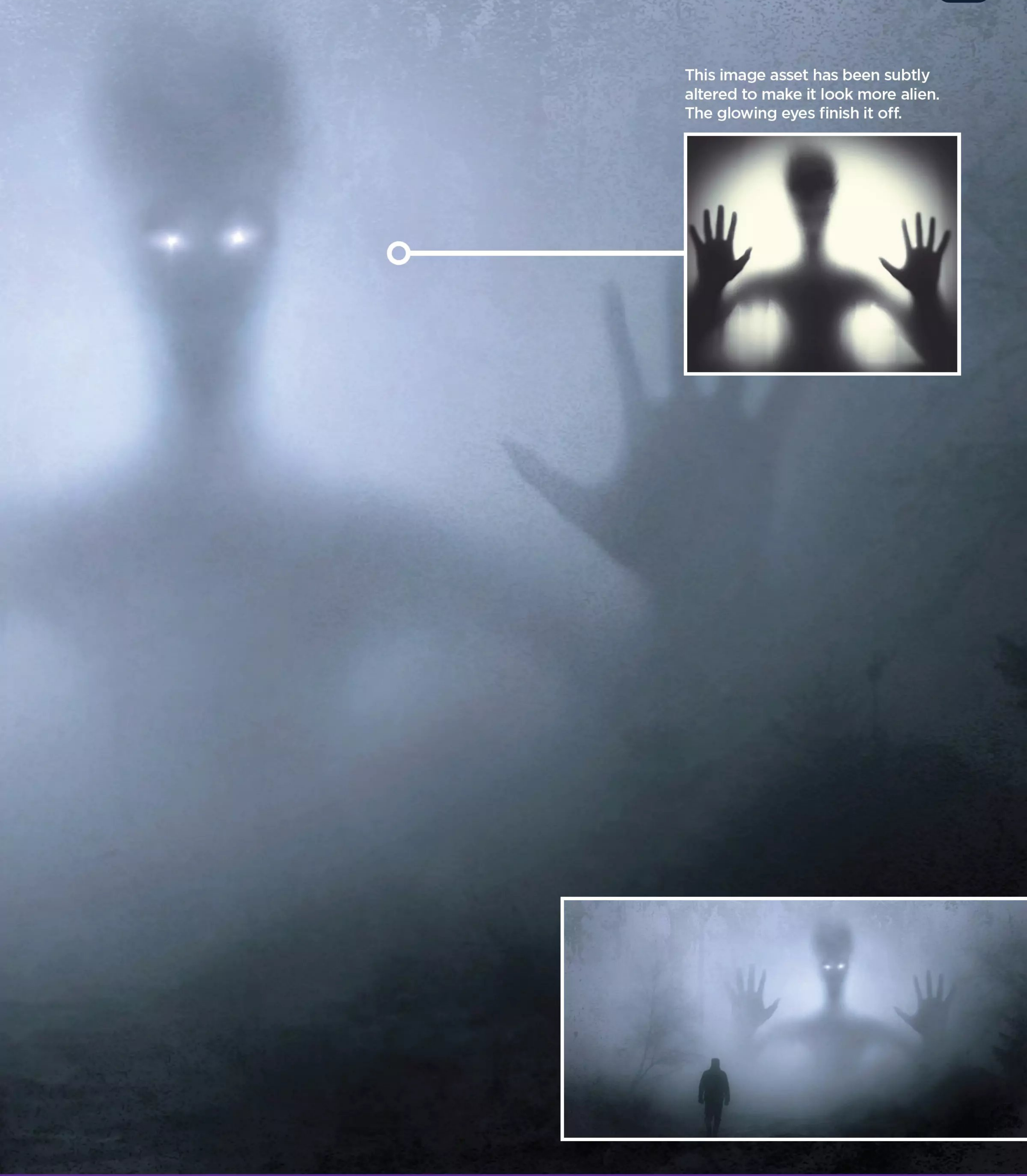
The subtle texture used around the edges has been blended in using the ‘blend if’ function in Photoshop.

Work Smart

04 Part of what can set you apart as an artist or image manipulator is creating images that are simple yet effective. Take this example. It only uses a couple of elements but is surreal and spooky and can be put together in 30 minutes.



A photographer has made this moody image available on Pixabay and has much promise for an edit.



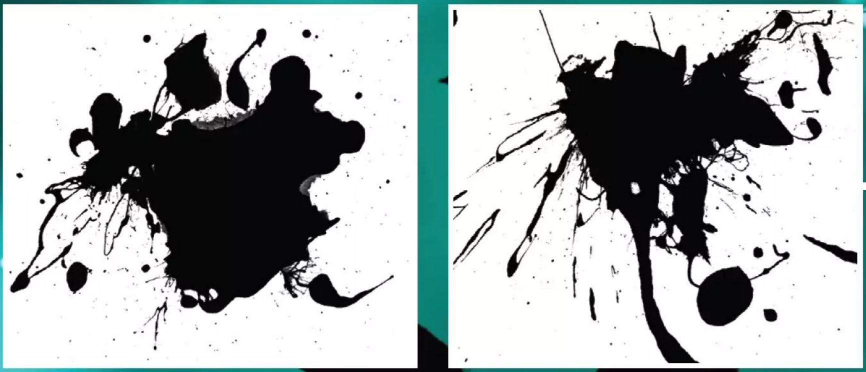
This image asset has been subtly altered to make it look more alien. The glowing eyes finish it off.

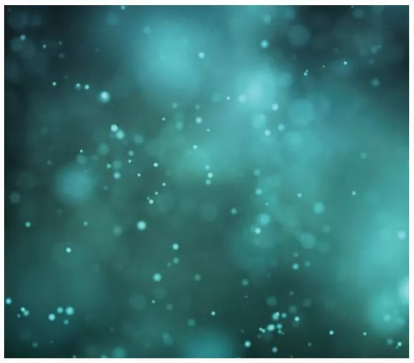
Images that Pop

05

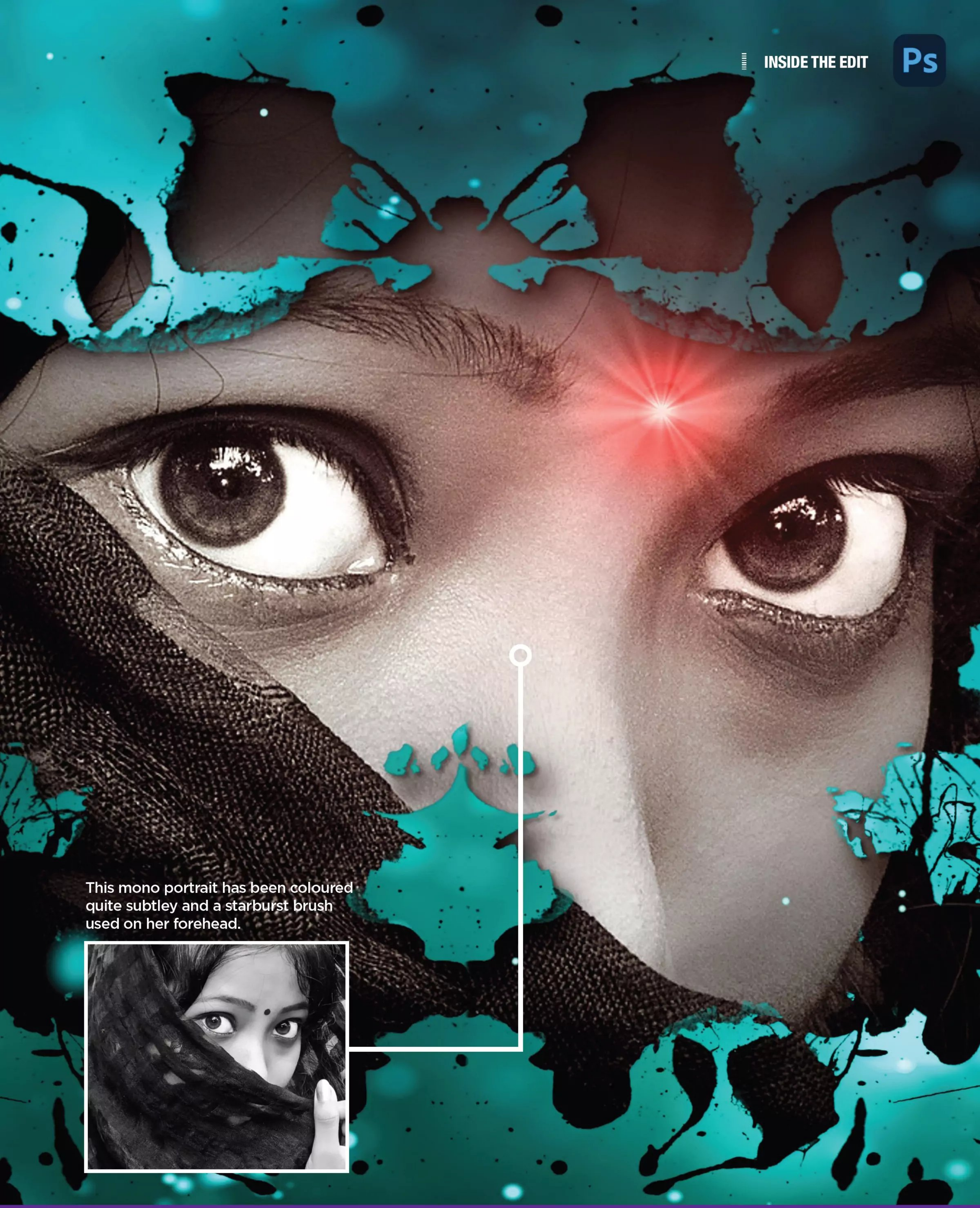
A few simple photographic and illustrative components from image sharing sites like Pixabay or Deviant Art and a little imagination can lead to eye-opening art. Let us show you how Photoshop can unlock your creative power.

The ink blot images are merged together and mirrored. Since they are black and white, it is easy to select their outline and use it to create a mask that can reveal the face through the abstract background.





The background image is an abstract creation through which the portrait of the girl can appear, thanks to the mask created from the ink blots shown above.

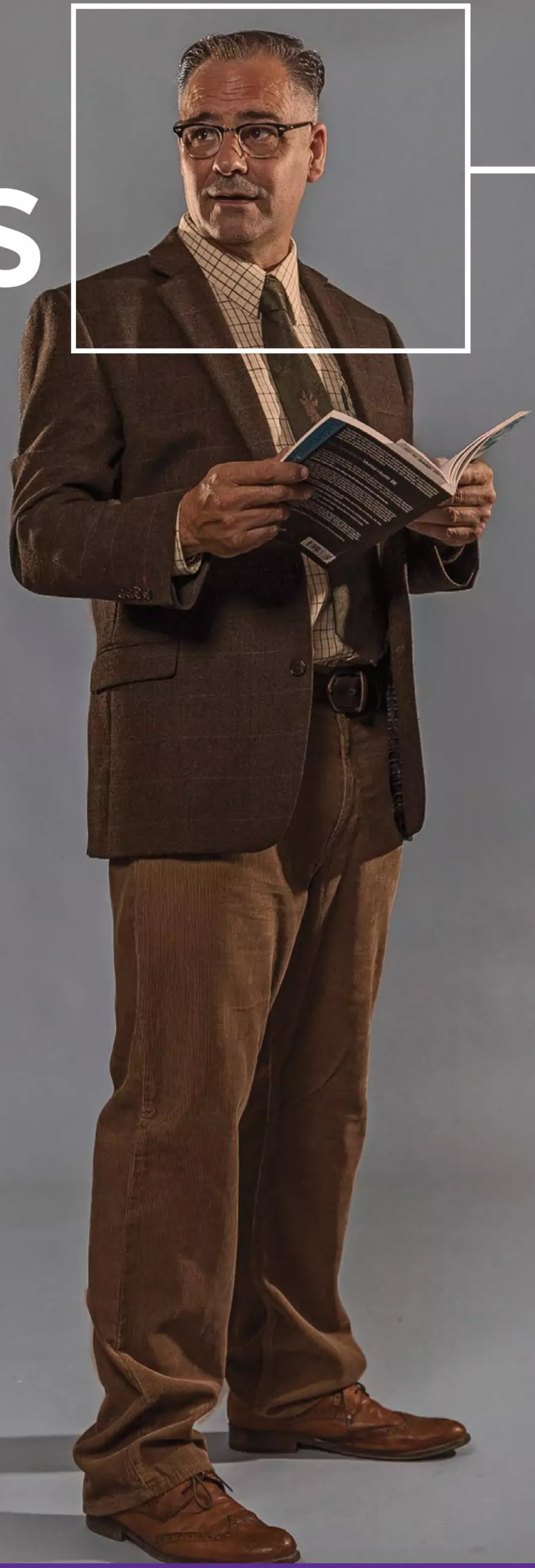


This mono portrait has been coloured quite subtley and a starburst brush used on her forehead.

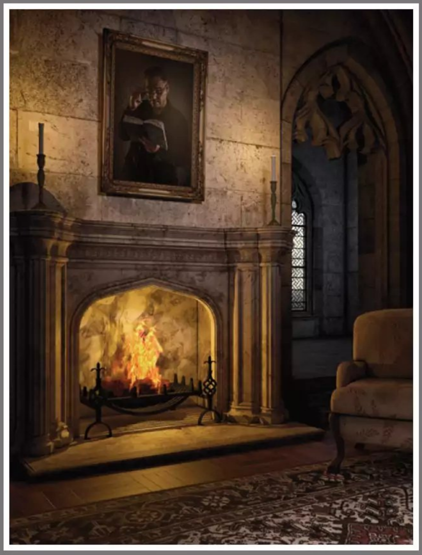
New Creations

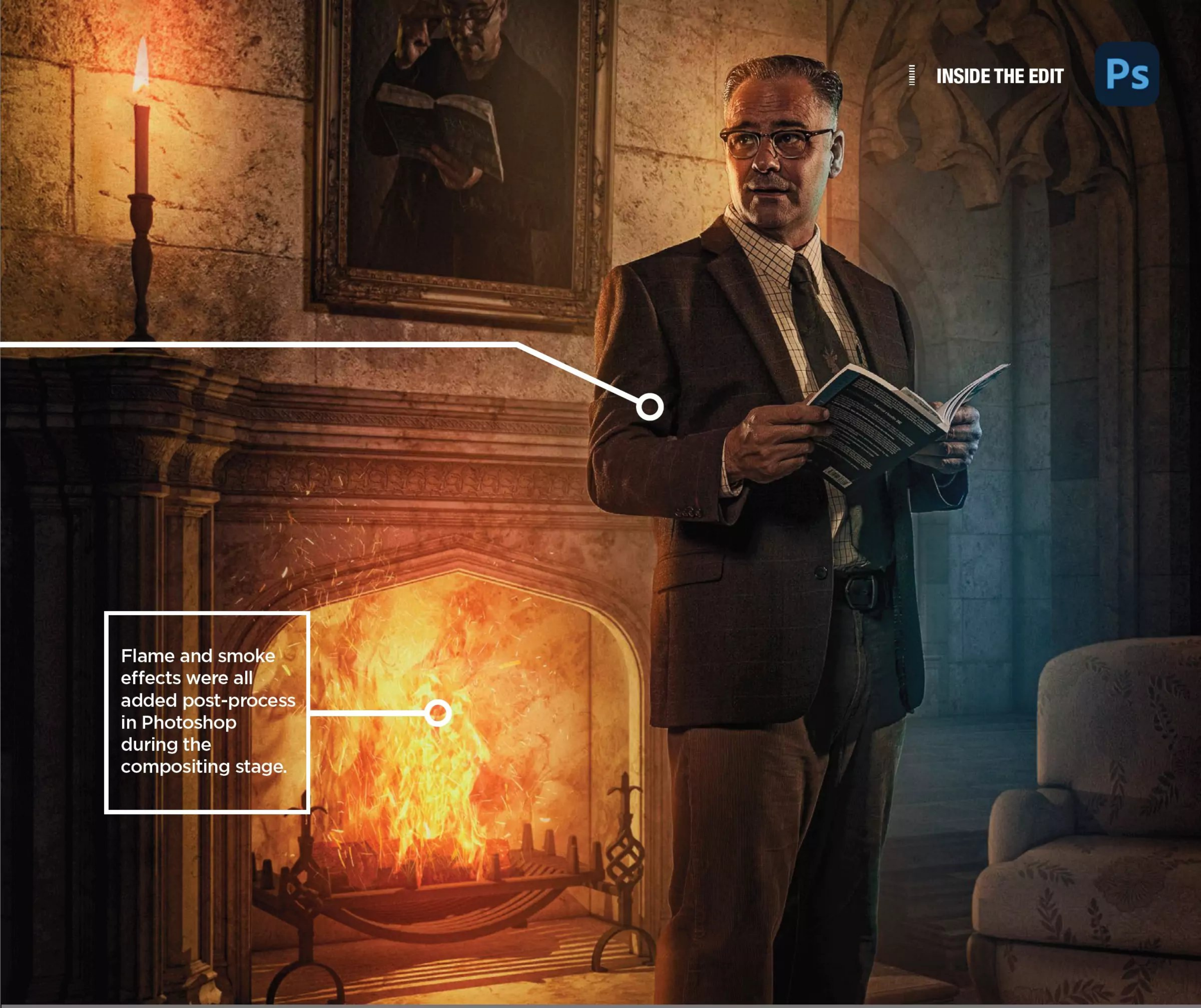
06

Compositing is a form of digital artwork creation that relies on assembling a number of different elements in one scene to look like they all belong together. One particularly effective method to combine real people into a scene is to shoot them against a grey screen. This greatly aids the process of masking and combining the subject with their new background.

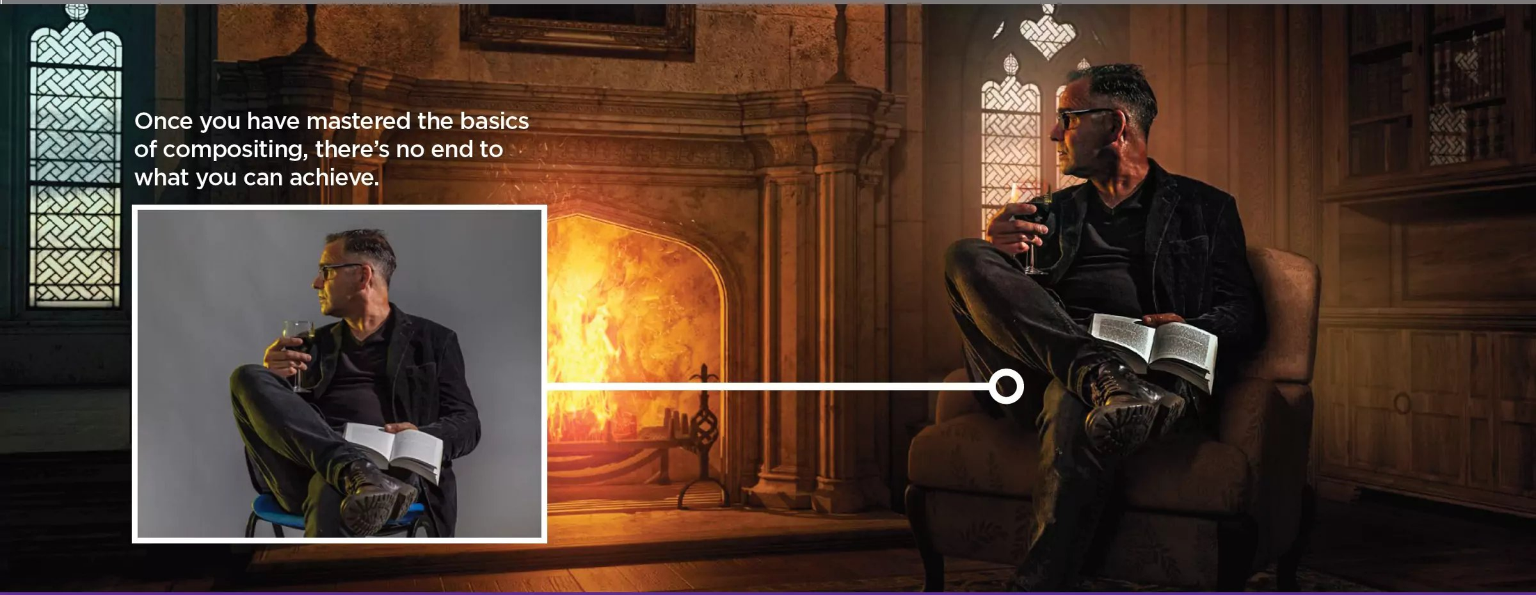


This render of a library will be composited with the real subject shot against the grey screen.





Flame and smoke effects were all added post-process in Photoshop during the compositing stage.



Once you have mastered the basics of compositing, there's no end to what you can achieve.

Glossary

A list of terms you may encounter as you learn

Active layer
The layer currently selected in the Layers panel.

Adjustment layer
A layer that lets you apply colour and tonal adjustments to your image without permanently changing pixel values. Use adjustment layers to experiment with colour and colour tones. You can think of an adjustment layer as a veil through which the underlying layers are seen.

Adobe RGB
The RGB colour space profile created by Adobe Systems, Incorporated. It provides a large gamut of colours. (See also RGB.)

Aliasing
The jagged edges seen at the edges of diagonal lines, arcs, and so on, caused by pixels lining up in a saw-tooth pattern.

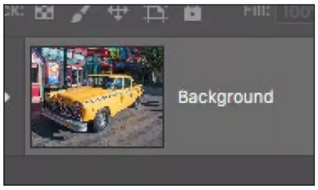
Alpha channels
Masks, which let you manipulate, isolate, and protect specific parts of an image. In Photoshop, alpha channels are called saved selections. To save an alpha channel, choose Select > Save Selection. To load an alpha channel, choose Select > Load Selection.

Anti-aliasing
The smoothing of jagged edges in digital images by averaging the colours of the pixels at a boundary.

Artefact
Any unexpected and undesired change to a digital image caused by incorrect settings or faulty processing. Examples include blooming, moiré, sharpening, and noise.

Aspect ratio
The ratio of an image's width to its height. It is used to determine how an image fits on a page or monitor.

Background layer
The bottom-most layer in an image, usually containing the image data. The Background layer is always locked. If you want to change its stacking order, blending mode, or opacity, you must first convert it to a regular layer.



Backlight
Light coming from a source behind the subject.

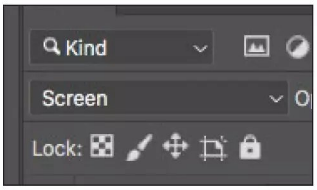
Batch processing
Performing one or more tasks to a group of files at the same time.

Bit depth
The number of colours used to represent a pixel in an image. A 1-bit image is black and white; an 8-bit image can have 256 colours or shades of grey; a 16-bit image can have 65,536 colours.

Bitmap image
An image consisting of rows and columns of pixels in computer memory. Also called a raster image. Bitmap file formats include BMP, GIF, JPEG, PSD, PICT, and TIFF. (See also vector graphics.)

Bits per channel
Determines how many tones each colour channel can contain.

Blending mode
A feature that controls how pixels in an image are affected by a painting or editing tool. The blend colour is applied to the base (original) colour to produce a new colour.



Brush preset
A brush with preset settings for size, thickness and so on. Photoshop includes several brush presets for you to choose from, and you can create a large number of your own presets as well.

Burning
The selective darkening of a part of an image.

Camera raw format
A format describing data exactly as it is captured by a camera sensor, with no in-camera processing applied to the capture.

Canvas
The workspace around an existing image, within the image window. Layer data may lie outside of the canvas, but it will be clipped to the canvas when the image is flattened. You can change the size and colour of the canvas by choosing Image > Resize > Canvas Size.

Channel
A construct for describing the colour data in an image. A black-and-white greyscale image has one channel, an RGB image has three, and a CMYK image has four.

Clipboard
The temporary holding area for data stored with the Cut or Copy commands.

Clone
To paint with the Clone Stamp tool. You must set a sampling point on the active layer before you paint with the Clone Stamp tool.

CMYK
Cyan, magenta, yellow, and black; the inks most printers use to produce colour images. Photoshop includes full support for CMYK mode.

Colour cast
An unwanted or unexpected colour shift in a photo. For example, a photo taken indoors without a camera flash may have too much yellow.

Colour channels
The component colours from which all colours in an image are created. Usually refers to red, green, and blue (RGB).

Colour depth
Measures how much colour information is available to display or print each pixel in an image. Greater colour depth means more available colours and more accurate colour representation in the digital image.

Colour management
A system used to achieve consistent colour as an image travels from one device to another.

Colour temperature
The degree of heat (in degrees Kelvin) that an object would have to absorb before it glowed in a certain colour. Each colour is associated with a colour temperature, as are various kinds of light.

Compression
A technique that reduces the file size of bitmap images.

Cropping
Trimming a portion of an image to improve its composition or to create a frame around it.

Definition
Sharpness or clarity of detail in an image.

Dithering
The approximation of an unavailable colour through the use of two or more available colours. The colour of adjacent pixels is changed in an attempt to reproduce the unavailable colour.

Dodging
The selective lightening of any part of an image.

Dots per inch (dpi)
A measure of printer resolution. High dpi settings produce prints with fine detail. Also used for monitors. (See also pixels per inch (ppi).)

Duotone
A two-colour greyscale file that uses two custom inks.

Embedded profile
An ICC (colour) profile resident in an image file. This profile ensures that image colours are correctly interpreted.

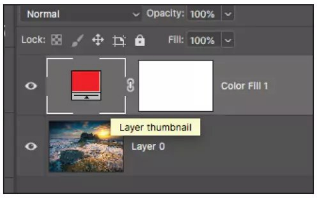
EPS
Encapsulated PostScript. A file format used to save images that will be used in illustration and page-layout programs.

EXIF
Exchangeable Image File Format. A standard for simplifying the exchange of data between cameras and software. The data may include camera model, date and time the photo was taken, camera settings, shutter speed, and so on.

Exposure
A measure of the amount of light in which a photo was taken. Underexposed digital photos are too dark; overexposed ones, too light.

Feathering
The softening of an edge of a selection.

Fill layer
A type of layer that contains a solid colour, a pattern, or a gradient as an interchangeable attribute. (See also layer and adjustment layer).



Filters
Options to alter the look of an image, for instance, to make it look like a mosaic, add unique lighting, apply distortions, and so on.

Flattening
Merging all visible layers into the Background layer to reduce file size.

Font
A set of letters, numbers, punctuation marks, and symbols that share a common weight, width, and style.

48-bit RGB colour
A high-bit image mode that can contain thousands of colours per channel. Photoshop supports 8-bit or 16-bits per colour channel, so an RGB image can be a total of 24-bit or 48-bit, depending on the bit depth per channel.

Gamma adjustment
The contrast resulting from darkening or lightening the mid-tones of an image.

Gamut
The range of colour that a device can reproduce.

Gaussian blur
A softening effect applied through a bell-shaped distribution of tones and colours.

GIF
Graphic Image File Format. A file format suitable for images that contain line art, large areas of a single colour, and text. Web animations are done with images in GIF format.

Gradient
Any of several methods for achieving a smooth transition between two adjacent colours, including black and white.

Greyscale
A single-channel image that includes only black, white, and shades of grey. Depending on the bit depth, greyscale images can reproduce various shades of grey.

Halftone
A monochrome image made up of variably sized dots simulating the shades of grey in a photograph. It is used for reproducing photographs on PostScript printers and printing presses.

Highlight and shadow
The lightest and darkest colours in an image.

Histogram
A bar chart showing the distribution of the pixel values in a digital image.

Hue
The colour reflected from or transmitted through an object. In common use, hue is the property that allows a colour to be distinguished as red, blue, yellow, and so on.

ICC
International Colour Consortium. ICC device profiles are the industry standard for reproducing colours accurately across devices such as scanners, monitors, and printers.

Image cache
A section of hard disk space used as virtual memory. The image cache speeds the on-screen redraw of high-resolution images.

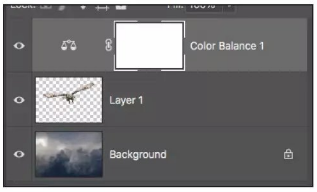
Image mode
The colour mode of an image, such as Greyscale or RGB.

Indexed colour
A colour that is rendered by using a pixel value as an index to a panel of 256 or fewer colours.

JPEG
Joint Photographic Experts Group. A committee of experts that develops algorithms for compressing computer image files. Also, any graphic file to which a JPEG algorithm is applied. JPEG is the format generally used to share photographs over the web.

JPEG compression
A lossy compression technique that reduces image data and file size.

Layer
A mechanism for overlaying and combining multiple images. Layers are like transparent sheets of glass that you can stack and rearrange.



Layer group
A collection of layers saved with a Photoshop image.

Layer mask
A protected area in an adjustment layer. Areas below the mask cannot be edited.

Levels
Functionality for adjusting colour and tone. With a Levels adjustment, you can set shadow and highlight values to use a full tonal range, adjust middle tones only, correct colour casts, and so on.

Locked layer
A layer in the Layers panel that has the lock icon applied. No changes can be made to a locked layer. A Background layer is always locked.

Lossless compression
An image-compression technique that prevents image degradation caused by data loss. Lossless techniques usually use lower compression ratios than lossy techniques.

Lossy compression
An image-compression technique using compression ratios that result in the loss of some image data.

Matting
A method for simulating transparency in images displayed on web pages. When transparency is not supported, you can specify a matte colour that matches the background to simulate transparency.

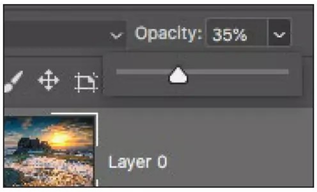
Midtone
An area that falls between the brightest highlight and the darkest shadow.

Moiré
A wavy striped pattern in an image, resembling the pattern of watered silk. Moiré can be an artefact caused by a camera's inability to capture the detail in an image.

Monitor resolution
The resolution of a monitor, described in pixel dimensions. The size of an image displayed on-screen depends on the pixel dimensions of the image, the size of the monitor, and the monitor resolution.

Noise
An artefact caused by interference or camera error. Noise is often seen as stray pixels of unexpected colour or a generally "grainy" appearance. Certain compression techniques can amplify noise.

Opacity
The extent to which something blocks light. You can change the opacity of layers, filters, and effects so that more (or less) of the underlying image shows through.



Panorama
A broad view of a subject, usually a landscape, made by overlapping individual shots as they are taken and then merging them to form one image.

PDF
Portable Document Format. An Adobe file format that captures the elements of a printed document, including graphics and photos, as an electronic image. You can search, navigate, print, and e-mail PDF documents.

Perspective
The angle or level from which a photograph is taken; the camera-eye view.

Pixel
The basic, rectangular unit of data that a digital image consists of. The edges of pixels can produce a saw-tooth pattern unless anti-aliasing is used.

Pixel dimensions
The number of pixels along the width and height of an image. This is a measure of the amount of image data in the photo, not its physical size when printed or displayed on a monitor.

Pixels per inch (ppi)
A measure of image resolution stored in a camera or computer file. High ppi settings produce photographs with fine detail and large file size. (See also dots per inch (dpi).)

PostScript
A language developed by Adobe that describes the appearance of text, graphic shapes, and sampled images on printed or displayed pages.

Printer profiles
Profiles that describe how printers reproduce colours.

Progressive scan
A process of displaying images on-screen that draws 60 complete frames of video from left to right every second. Progressive scan creates a cleaner, clearer picture than interlaced video.

PSD
The native uncompressed file format of Adobe Photoshop, based on the TIFF standard.

Quick mask
A mask channel created in Quick Mask mode.

Red eye
The reflection of the camera flash from the retina of a photographed subject, resulting in a red dot in the subject's eye. You can eliminate it automatically when you import images or by using the Red Eye Removal tool.

Rendering
Converting a vector layer such as a shape layer or a text layer into a normal layer.

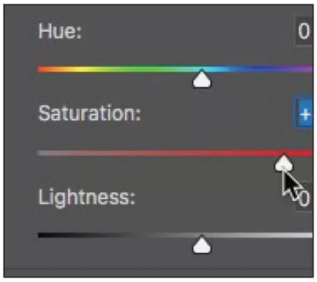
Resample
To change the resolution of an image by changing its pixel dimensions. Downsampling is decreasing the number of pixels, and resampling up (or upsampling) is increasing the number.

Resolution
A measure of the clarity and sharpness of an image. In digital images, it is measured in pixels per inch.

RGB
A model for representing colours on a computer display. Red, green, and blue (RGB) are combined in different proportions to represent any colour. The RGB model can represent 256 x 256 x 256 colours.

Sample
To select a colour with the eyedropper in order to use it with a drawing or painting tool.

Saturation
The purity, or strength, of a colour. A fully saturated colour contains no grey. Saturation controls make colours more vivid (less black or white added) or more muted (more black or white added).



Selection
A part of an image selected for manipulation of any kind, duplication in a layer, colour correction, deletion, rotation, and so on. The selection consists of all the pixels, fully or partially selected, contained within the selection boundary.

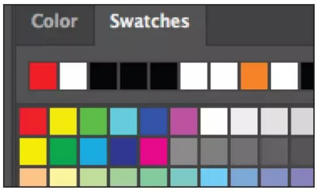
Sharpening
In photo-editing programs, any functionality that enhances the details at the edges of photographed objects and people. Sharpening is often applied as part of in-camera processing as well, although no sharpening is applied to camera raw file images.

Skewing
Deviation of the content of an image from a vertical or horizontal axis. Skewing can be a camera artefact or an intentionally applied effect.

Smoothing
A technique for averaging the values of neighbouring pixels to reduce contrast and create a soft, blurry effect.

Stroke
(1) An outline around an image or part of an image created with the Stroke command or with a drawing, painting, or selection tool. (2) The characteristics of the lines created with one of the painting or drawing tools, especially brushes.

Swatches
Preset colours that you can choose from in the Colour Swatches panel.



TIFF
Tagged Image File Format. A digital image format widely used for images that are to be printed or published. TIFF images can be compressed losslessly.

Transform
To scale, shrink, enlarge, skew, distort, rotate, or change the perspective of a layer, selection, or shape.

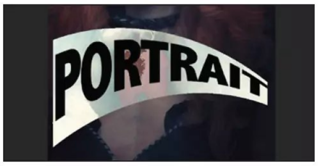
Transparency
In digital photography, the functionality that supports transparent areas in an image or image layer. Certain image formats do not support transparency.

Unsharp mask
A technique that sharpens details in an image by increasing the contrast between light and dark areas. (The name originates from traditional photography, where contrast is increased by adding a slightly blurred negative over the original.)

Vector graphics
Lines, shapes, and other graphic image components stored in a format that incorporates geometric formulas for rendering the image elements. For this reason, the graphics scale without degradation of image quality, and there are no jagged lines in the output. Adobe Illustrator is a vector graphics program.

Vignetting
A darkening of the edges of an image.

Warping
A distortion of an image, often text, to conform to a variety of shapes. For instance, a line of text can be warped in the shape of an arc or wave.



White balance
A function that compensates for the different rendering of identical colours under different sources of light: incandescent, fluorescent, sunlight, and so on.

White point
A reference point used to represent white. This reference point is used to calculate all other colours in the image.

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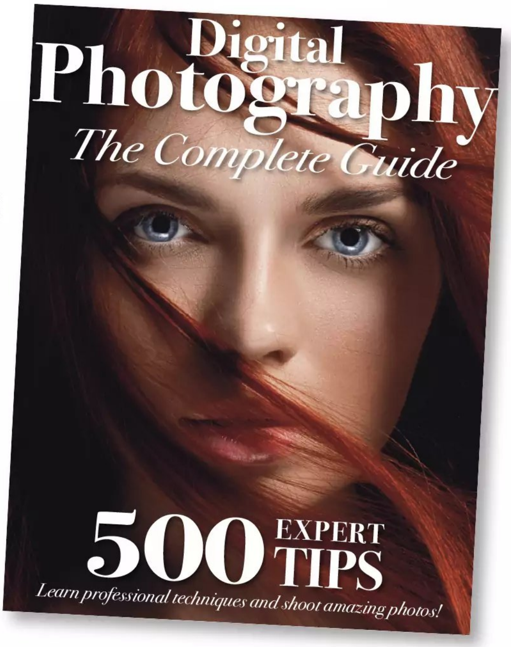
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